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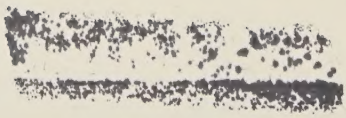

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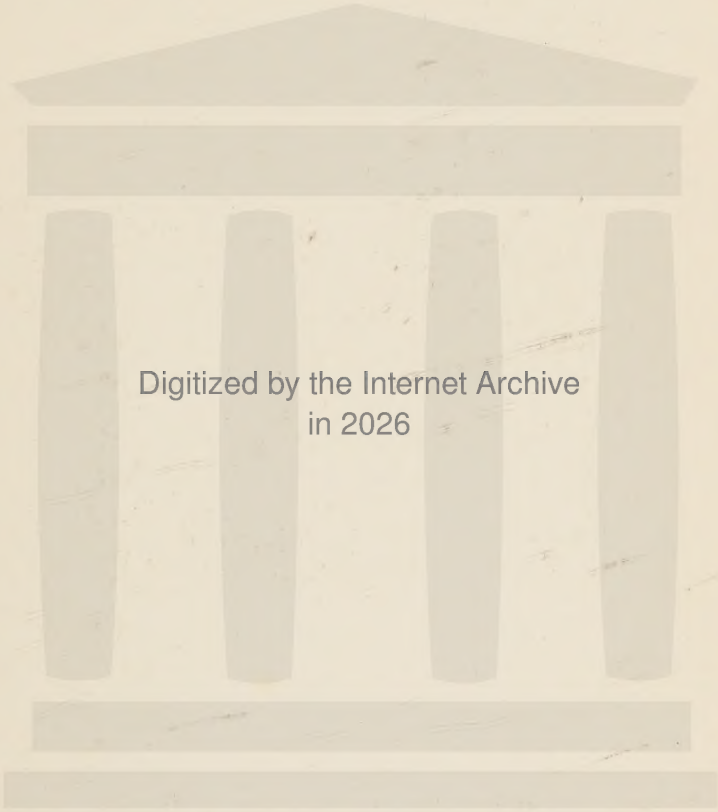
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Walker & Cockerell. ph. sc.

From the portrait painted for Topham Beauclerk now belonging to Mr. Hallam Murray.

CONTEMPORARY CRITICISMS

OF

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

HIS WORKS, AND HIS BIOGRAPHERS

COLLECTED AND EDITED

BY JOHN KER SPITTAL

WITH FRONTISPIECE

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1923

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PREFACE

It is with fear and trembling that I present this book to the public; but I appeal to Johnsonians and Boswellians especially to regard my pious endeavour with charity.

It will be remarked, as a matter of course, "What! another book on Johnson! surely there can be nothing new to say on that subject."

So far as it goes, the statement is true. The contents of this book were written some one hundred and fifty years ago and published in no less than fifty-two volumes of the *Monthly Review*, a series which has practically vanished.

Many of the criticisms I have here reprinted, appeared during Johnson's life-time. It would be unusually interesting to know what the great man thought of them while the printed pages were still damp from the press.

And thanks to the immortal Boswell we are able to answer that fleeting wonder.

In his Life, Boswell has said,

A.D. 1767. The King then asked him if there were any other literary journals published in this kingdom, except the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*; and on being answered there were no other, his Majesty asked which of them was the best: Johnson answered, that the *Monthly Review* was done with most care, the *Critical* upon the best principles; adding that the authours of the *Monthly Review* were enemies to the Church. This the King said he was sorry to hear.

Again in 1776, Boswell records,

Talking of the Reviews, Johnson said, "I think them very impartial: I do not know an instance of partiality." He mentioned what had passed upon the subject of the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*, in the conversation with

which his Majesty had honoured him. He expatiated a little more on them this evening. "The Monthly Reviewers (said he,) are not Deists; but they are Christians with as little christianity as may be; and are for pulling down all establishments. The Critical Reviewers are for supporting the constitution both in church and state. The Critical Reviewers, I believe, often review without reading the books through; but lay hold of a topick, and write chiefly from their own minds. The Monthly Reviewers are duller men, and are glad to read the books through."

This collection, which has, I think, been unduly overlooked, is for the first time brought together in one volume. I believe that by doing this work I have done a service to Johnson, and in that spirit I offer it as a tribute of homage and affection to him.

JOHN KER SPITTAL.

ETTRICK LODGE,
BROMLEY, KENT.
June 26, 1923.

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SECTION I

THE LIFE, WORKS AND ANECDOTES OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

By MRS. HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI.
„ JOSEPH TOWERS, ESQ., LL.D.
„ SIR JOHN HAWKINS, KNT.
„ JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.
„ ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.
„ ROBERT ANDERSON, ESQ., M.D.

I

May 1786 Vol. 74 p. 373[1]

"*At etiam* LITERAS, *quas me sibi misisse dicerat*, RECITAVIT, *homo et* HUMANITATIS *expers, et vitæ communis ignarus. Quis enim unquam, qui paululum modo bonorum consuetudinem nosset*, LITERAS *ad se ab* AMICO *missas*, OFFENSIONE *aliqua* INTERPOSITA, *in medium protulit, palamque recitavit? Quid est aliud*, TOLLERE E VITA VITÆ SOCIETATEM, *quàm tollere* AMICORUM COLLOQUIA ABSENTIUM? *Quàm multa* JOCA *solent esse in epistolis, quæ prolata si sint*, INEPTA *esse videantur? Quàm multa* SERIA, *neque tamen ullo modo* DIVULGANDA?"[2]

Such are the fulminations which Cicero pours forth against Antony, when he had dishonourably promulgated, in the Temple of Concord, the secret counsels of the orator:—counsels intrusted to him, in the hour of privacy, and communicated by letter, in the confidence of friendship!—What admirer of the moral excellencies, and of the extensive learning of the late Samuel Johnson, can forbear feeling the same indignation, and expressing it with equal warmth, when they behold his *former* friends exposing his failings and his weaknesses, to the curious, yet fastidious eye of the Public?

[1] Art. VIII. *Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, during the last Twenty Years of his Life. By Hester Lynch Piozzi. 8vo. 4*s*. Boards. Cadell. 1786.

[2] This passage, which is in the *second Philippic* of Cicero, has been thus translated by Duncan: "The wretch, void of all politeness, and ignorant even of common decency, publicly read the letters, which he says I wrote to him. For who, that knows ever so little of what passes among men of honour, upon occasion of a slight quarrel, ever exposed and publicly read the letters, that were sent him by his friend? To destroy the intercourse of absent friends, what is it, but to strip life of all its social joys? How many jokes are there generally in letters, which, if exposed, would appear trifling? how many serious things, yet by no means to be divulged?"—By applying this quotation to *conversation* instead of *letters*, our Readers will perceive how similar the situation of the authoress of these *Anecdotes* is to that of Mark Antony.

Dr. Johnson was one of the very few, who might have exclaimed without fear: "O that my ENEMY would write a book!"—Had this been the case, the tenets of a resolute Tory, and rigid high-church principles, might have been exposed with severity; though, probably, the abilities of the scholar, and the virtues of the man, might have defied the force of inimical attacks. To his distinguished talents, indeed, his countrymen have paid their tribute of applause: by his goodness and his charity, the distresses of poverty and the miseries of disease appear to have been constantly alleviated!—An ENEMY, however, would have intentionally overlooked these prominent features of his character, would have brought forward his weaknesses—and would have exhibited them in the most striking situations! But no one of that class stepped forth, *vibrans hastilia dextra!* Johnson's ENEMIES judiciously left the office of *biographer* to his FRIENDS!—How have *they* executed the high duty?—Every Reader can answer the question.

The publications respecting this literary *Coryphæus* have been very numerous; but no one, we fancy, has engaged the attention of the Public in a higher degree than the Anecdotes, which are the subject of our present examination. A third edition, indeed, was advertised, even before a Review of the first could find a place in our Journal.—The name of *Thrale* had been long made known to the Public, by Dr. Johnson's having, for so many years, honoured that family with his society. Streatham and the Borough seemed his peculiar residence, even more than his own humble mansion. Hence we were taught to expect great entertainment from a work, in which it was supposed, that the facts would be of indisputable authority; while it was hoped, that *more apis matinæ*, our Authoress would select only the most excellent of Johnson's *bon mots*. For, as her stock was imagined to be ample, it was concluded, that the reputation of her deceased friend would not suffer, in order to swell the size of the volume.

We had also ventured to promise ourselves, that as the writer had been favoured so continually, with the Doctor's conversation, her pages would be replete with

acute strictures on men and manners, with critical remarks, and learned observations, with moral reflections, and profound disquisitions:—such as beam like luminaries of resplendent beauty, in so many parts of his works; and, if we have not been misinformed, commonly united to render his conversation, at once splendid and instructive:

"*Magna quidem de te nobis promisimus omnes.*" [1]

Oh! that we could add:

"*Spem tamen evinces meritis.*" [2]

Much, indeed, were we disappointed.—This volume contains few anecdotes of Dr. Johnson's life; no regular conversation of any length; and scarce any remarks that will be deemed of consequence. The collection of his *bon mots*, indeed, is rather considerable, and entertaining; but too many of them seem recorded merely to shew, that a severe speech was the certain effect of provocation, and the sure reward of impropriety and impertinence. The nature, however, of these ANECDOTES renders it impossible to collect from them any idea of his abilities in argument, or of his powers in general conversation, in which his wit and imagination must have displayed their strength with great advantage; and whoever should attempt to form any decisive opinion of Johnson's faculties from *them*, might almost as well pretend to judge of Menander's skill in drawing characters, his abilities in supporting them, and his ingenuity in contriving his plots, from the fragments of his Comedies, which are now extant.

There is another effect apparently produced by the brevity with which these speeches are recorded, that we cannot help suspecting, from the general tenour of the volume, the Authoress [3] eagerly wished to promote.—

[1] Virgil. "*We all indeed promised ourselves great things of you.*"

[2] "*Yet you exceed our expectation in your deserts.*"

[3] We are induced to make this assertion, from the *studied carefulness*, with which all the Doctor's *rough* speeches appear to be placed in a conspicuous point of view. By them the Authoress undoubtedly hopes to convince the world, that it was impossible to live under the same roof with Dr. Johnson, after Mr. Thrale's death, so capricious were his humours, so rude his reproofs, and so uncivilized was his behaviour. Did he become *an altered* MAN, or did she become *an altered* WOMAN after that event?

Whoever judges of Dr. Johnson's behaviour, in common life, from this work alone, will be apt to pronounce him even a greater Hottentot, than he has been represented by Lord Chesterfield.—But who will cry, *Ex pede Herculem !*—This might have been obviated, by presenting the Reader with the *substance, at least*, of the conversations which preceded these *rough speeches*. If this had been done, we dare almost affirm, that it would have appeared, in most instances, that some provocation, either in words, in actions, or in manners, had occasioned these severe censures. For who will assert, however rugged the Doctor may have been in temper, and unpolished in behaviour, that it was his settled plan to bear down, without mercy, or distinction, all who approached him, though, not a syllable had been uttered to kindle his wrath, or to provoke his resentment ?

The Preface is awkwardly expressed, and the paragraphs do not seem to belong to one another. It is deficient in grace, ease, and connection ; and consists of three or four *glaring* thoughts which seem to have met by *chance*, like the atoms of *Epicurus*, and to have *accidentally* composed this introduction. It may be compared to *Beau Mordecaï's* dress, in *Love à la Mode*, who is *very fine, indeed ;* " as fine as a jay—and better decked out than any tooth-drawer in town ! "—while the colours are so injudiciously blended, that the *bonny Girgishite* becomes rather an object of laughter, than admiration.

Most of the anecdotes respecting Johnson's family appear to be new : and most of those which relate to his education, and his early doubts of the truth of Christianity are, indeed, curious.[1] How just, and how worthy of publication are his own observations on education, and the treatment of children ?—*O si sic omnia !* Had the whole volume been composed of such materials, how could the Public have sufficiently thanked our Authoress :—but soon—too soon—the note is changed. We are told at the conclusion of these very remarks, that a speech of Dr. Johnson's to a lady, who fancied her son might become emi-

[1] Part of the reflections, which follow, and particularly that *by a friend here at Florence*, might have been spared.

nent, because Shakespeare did, *without study*, is *suppressed, because it was gross*.—We suppose, that the reply was *mentioned* for the same reason—*because it was gross*.

We find *few* anecdotes of Dr. Johnson's early life preserved in this volume. Of his history at college *little* is related; of his commencing author, *nothing;* and scarcely one of his adventures is recorded, during that gloomy season, in which he was labouring "amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and sorrow," to arrive at the road,

"*Quâ se quoque possit*
Tollere humo, victorque virûm volitare per ora!"

The title-page professes only twenty years;—so that, though we really lament these omissions, the Public are obliged to the Authoress for every anecdote which records an event anterior to that period. It is said, that Dr. Adams and Dr. Taylor can supply these deficiencies, and we trust, that they will communicate all they know on this subject to the Public.

The poems, the literary anecdotes, and the account of Johnson's works, form the most valuable part of the volume. As we are told in it, that he gave away a prodigious number of *Prefaces*, *Sermons*, *Lectures*, and *Dedications*, to poor Authors, we hope that they will be carefully collected, and inserted in the promised edition of his works.

His partiality for Oxford appears sometimes to have been carried to greater lengths than even *Alma Mater* herself could have wished to inculcate. The five Cambridge men, however, with whom he disputed (p. 36) will feel much more inclined to pardon his panegyric of a rival University, than Mr. Mason's friends will our Authoress, for recording Johnson's speeches on his *Caractacus!* [1]

The Doctor does not appear to have reckoned his knowledge of Greek very profound (p. 54). We have been in-

[1] In p. 60 we find, "Of James Harris's Dedication to his Hermes, I have heard him observe, that, though but fourteen lines long, there were six grammatical faults in it." In the first place, the Dedication consists of *thirty* lines, and in the next place there are *no* grammatical faults in it.—Johnson either forgot himself, or spoke of some other production: our Authoress should have examined the point, or have suppressed the anecdote.

formed, however, that he was a very good scholar; and he possibly esteemed his own skill in that language to be superficial, because he had not the critical abilities of Bentley, and because he knew, that there were several who might claim a higher degree of praise, for nicer investigations of its peculiarities, and for a more extensive acquaintance with its writers.

To point out all the parts of these anecdotes which friendship would have suppressed, were an easy, but a tedious office. It must be observed, however, that *many* of the speeches, which appear *rude*, when they stand by themselves, were probably delivered in a sportive manner, which blunted their edge; and that others would be acknowledged *just* reproofs, as we have already hinted, if we were in possession of the *conversations*, by which they were preceded. Even our authoress allows, that he did not hate the persons, whom he drove from him by apparent scorn, and treated with roughness. In addition to the severe speeches, which she relates to have been made to herself, the Public are in possession of a letter, which the Doctor is said to have written on a late occasion, but of this no more at present.

We shall endeavour to select such parts of this volume, as will give our Readers any insight into Dr. Johnson's *character*, his modes of thinking, and his rules of action. It appears, that he was an excellent calculator; and that in conversation, ethics, figures, and metaphysical reasoning, were more favourite topics, than politics or history. When a gentleman talked to him about Cataline's conspiracy, he said, that he withdrew his attention, and thought about Tom Thumb. (p. 81).

To the poor he was not merely charitable: he not only relieved their distresses, but even wished to grant them indulgences; and so far from refusing his mite to beggars, because they laid it out in gin or tobacco, he used to plead for gratifying them with "such sweetners of their existence." With his band of pensioners he usually spent his time from Saturday to Monday night, when he returned to Mr. Thrale's, after having given them *three* good dinners.

His contempt for frivolous complaints, and his dis-

approbation of those who gave way to them, are strongly marked, and conspicuously evident. He had been a great reader of Mandeville and Rochefoucault, and even in the purest minds the slightest corruption could not escape his penetration. Those who lamented the loss of relatives seldom found a comforter in Johnson, much less did those who suffered from the ingratitude of mankind. The wounds of the *former* he termed the wounds of vanity and softness (p. 26), for which he had no compassion to spare, in a great city, in which hunger and nakedness were so common. To the *latter*, he used to recommend the performance of good actions, in future, on higher motives.

It seems to have been his opinion, that there was little gross wickedness in the world, and still less extraordinary virtue. Those who too bitterly lamented the one, he would accuse of canting; and those who praised the other in too high terms, also provoked his censure. His own ardent and sincere piety, and his fears of not doing as much as he thought would be *expected*, for what had been *given*, induced him to establish private fasts (p. 91) at stated periods, and made him respect religious retirements, even among Roman Catholics. In prayer, his manner was so vehement, and his tones were so pathetic, that he would have animated the most languid hearers. His abhorrence of infidels inspired the asperity with which he attacked them (p. 93); while the pious and the charitable were sure of finding him impressed in their favour, whenever they were introduced to his notice.

From his imperfect sight (p. 98) he had no taste for painting; and his deafness prevented his even hearing music perfectly, much less could he admire it; nor had he any fondness for prospects. While he was in France, he desired his companions not to talk of the *varieties* of the *country*, but to consider how the *inhabitants* differed from those they had left in England.

He justly thought that solitude was dangerous to young females. His arguments (p. 106) are well worthy of perusal. He seems to have approved of cards, and dancing, as necessary relaxations for the vacant mind; and of dress, as the necessary concomitant of rank and titles.

His memory was uncommonly retentive; while his strict love of veracity taught him to retain the minutest events, and was the principal cause of his opposing people in conversation. He is said to have related stories with uncommon *powers* of humour, though he seldom called forth *those powers* into practice.

He always urged, with great acuteness, the necessity of employment, in all ranks of life, and in every station. He was fond of chemistry, and used to attempt very hazardous experiments, in his pursuit of this science.—The weak and the ignorant often applied to him for comfort and advice; and he concealed, with immoveable steadiness, whatever his friends or acquaintance had communicated to him about their own foibles. But his fidelity, in numberless instances, seems to have been ineffectual, as those who confest, and particularly Goldsmith (p. 244), were themselves the first to reveal their own weaknesses.

Johnson had no fondness for country amusements. He knew, indeed, too well the value and utility of the society which is to be found in London, not to wish to be ever an inhabitant of the metropolis.—His penetration, as we may gather also from his works, appears to have been very uncommon. To mysteriousness in trifles (p. 270) he was an enemy; and in his opinions of the female sex, not always a panegyrist (p. 271). In their infant state, however, he shewed more regard to girls than to boys, as he seemed to dread the latter turning out ill.

His observation was not confined to the great lines of character or manners. It extended (p. 286) to the *minutiæ* of dress, and behaviour. Every impropriety called forth his censure. He possessed uncommon powers of *improvisation*, and was a great reader of French literature. His favourite authors were Boileau and Rochefoucault.

In his most severe replies, his love of the *utile* is descernible; and it appears, that what he *did* was gentle, though what he *said* was rough. Had his actions been recorded, instead of his words, observes our Authoress, nothing but acts of virtue, differently modified, could have been related; and "no mean or wretched, no wicked, or even slightly culpable action" could be produced, "and put

in the scale, against a life of seventy years spent in the uniform practice of every moral excellence, and every Christian perfection." *Humility*, indeed, as she says, in some cases, must be excepted; but even that shone with double lustre, when it was called forth by piety and charity.

Such are the principal *traits* of Dr. Johnson's character, furnished by these Anecdotes; in which, however, there is much that ought to have been suppressed, and, we will venture to pronounce, would have been suppressed, if Mrs. Piozzi had *properly* considered what would contribute to her *own* reputation, or what would have raised that of her deceased *friend*, in the public esteem. On some of these passages we shall now hazard a few observations, for which, perhaps, no apology is necessary to our Authoress, as she has described herself to be "studious to avoid offending, and careless of that offence which can be taken without a cause." [1] She will, therefore, we doubt not, smile at our criticisms, if by the means of *some good-natured friend*, they should reach her, and consign them to oblivion, as not worthy of notice!—Peace to their *manes*, we say—but cannot yet conclude.

The Doctor has been much censured for the minuteness with which he has described Pope's mode of living.—What then are we to say to the account which our Authoress gives of Johnson's?—Was it necessary for her to record the boiled pork, or the salt beef, the port wine with Capillaire, or the peaches at Ombersley?

The account of Johnson's introduction to Mr. Thrale's family is strangely misplaced. Why did it not follow the Anecdotes of his college life? The like confusion, however, pervades the whole volume. Hence the same positions are laid down, and the same observations repeated, in different places. The *Philippic* against English newspapers is well-conceived, and *feelingly* written; while the preference, in defiance of their severity, which they give to our nation, over less liberal governments, is shrewdly remarked.

How frequently, in the perusal of this book, have we lamented that Dr. Johnson did not write his *own* memoirs!

[1] Preface, p. viii. Piozzi's Anecdotes.

We should then have had his reasons assigned for the severe decisions which he often made; and not have had a bitter sarcasm obtruded on the Public, merely because it conveyed a harsh censure. Such is the case, in these Anecdotes, in numerous instances.—But when we read the paltry joke about Mr. Thrale's looking *as white* as the chalk pit into which he leaped, when the horses were running away with his carriage, our *resentment* is turned into *pity*.

Among many other passages, which should have been suppressed, is the anecdote of Mr. Thrale putting his hand before Johnson's mouth, in order to prevent some improper confession. It is related with an obscurity which ought to be cleared away. The story should not have been curtailed, as where any thing is left to suspicion and conjecture, the *worst* is always imagined.

One passage (p. 138) we shall transcribe, and take the liberty of hazarding a few remarks on it, which may be almost as free, as those which are made on the character of her deceased friend, by the Authoress, in many parts of her volume.

"Mr. Thrale had a very powerful influence over the Doctor, and could make him suppress many rough answers; he could likewise prevail on him to change his shirt, his coat, or his plate, almost before it became indispensably necessary to the comfortable feelings of his friends: but as I never had any ascendancy at all over Mr. Johnson, except just in the things that concerned his health, it grew extremely perplexing and difficult to live in the house with him, when the master of it was no more; the worse, indeed, because his dislikes grew capricious, and he could scarce bear to have any body come to the house whom it was absolutely necessary for me to see."

Δεινή τις ὀργὴ καὶ δυσίατος πέλει,
ὅταν φίλοι φίλοισιν ἐμβαλῶσ' ἔριν.

says the wise Euripides. The meaning is, for it may be necessary to translate for the benefit of *those*, who travel with *unlearned* tutors: "Anger is terrible, and difficult to pacify, when friends contend with friends!"—And so

this is the return which Johnson made for such constant attention to his health, and such sacrifices to his ease ?—for twenty years nursing, board, and lodging ?—Unparalleled ingratitude !—What, not change his plate, not shift his linen, not let his caprices give way to the *absolute necessities* of his hostess ?—For shame, Dr. Johnson !—But there are a few questions which we should suppose will be asked ! *Who* was *most* wished to be present ? *Whom* did he *most* keep at a distance ?—

> " *Haud quicquam mihi dulce meorum*
> *Te sine,* FRATER, *erit.*"

Alas, poor Johnson !—*such* are the complaints with which thy memory is violated :—*such* are the returns which thou receivest, for having reflected so high a degree of lustre on the name of THRALE !—for having rendered STREATHAM the seat of literature, and of the Muses !—for having attracted, even into the distant BOROUGH, the most eminent characters of our nation !—He might have cried out to our Authoress as Jason does to Medea :

> Μείζω γε μέντοι τῆς ἐμῆς σωτηρίας
> εἴληφας ἢ δέδωκας, ὡς ἐγὼ φράσω.
> πρῶτον μὲν Ἑλλαδ' ἀντὶ βαρβάρου χθονὸς
> γαῖαν κατοικεῖς, καὶ δικὴν ἐπίστασαι,
> πάντες δὲ σ' ἠσθοντ' οὖσαν Ἕλληνες σοφὴν,
> καὶ δόξαν ἔσχες· εἰ δὲ γῆν ἐπ' ἐσχάτοις
> ὅροισιν ᾤκεις, οὐκ ἂν ἦν λόγος σέθεν.[1]

If Mr. Thrale had been the survivor, how different would have been the language of our Authoress ! He felt the value of Johnson too sincerely, to suffer *an unclean shirt*, or *a dirty plate* to produce a separation ; and the Doctor seems to have returned the regard with equal warmth !—How pathetically does he say, in his PRAYERS, of his *dear friend*

[1] This may be thus translated : The advantages, which you have received by my preservation are greater than those which you have bestowed. First, instead of your former barbarous country, you dwell in Greece, and understand what propriety of conduct demands ;—and, next, by my means, all the Greeks think that you are a wise woman, and among them you have acquired reputation. But if you had still remained (*without my interference*) in your distant mansion, who would ever have spoken of you, or have heard your name mentioned ?

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Thrale; "I felt almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon the face, that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me, but with respect or benignity."—Again—"The decease of him, from whose friendship I had obtained many opportunities of amusement, and to whom I turned my thoughts, as to a refuge from misfortunes, has left me heavy."—Again—"My first knowledge of Thrale was in 1765. I enjoyed his favour for almost a fourth part of my life."—Such were the feelings of Johnson, after Mr. Thrale's funeral.—For his prayer, *on leaving Mr. Thrale's family*, we must refer our Readers to the book!—But who, that peruses what has been transcribed, but must feel indignation at the motives assigned by our Authoress, for her separation from Dr. Johnson.

There is a subsequent passage also (p. 292), in which the Authoress *attempts* again to apologize for her desertion of Dr. Johnson, and retiring to Bath, leaving him, according to her own account of his habitation, to die in a confined room and narrow court in London? Such conduct must have been censured by the discriminating part of mankind, even if the excuses offered in defence of such a proceeding had not been ideal and unfounded. After having supported the health of this great man for seventeen years, after having been his companion and his nurse, and after the loss of Mr. Thrale, how our Authoress can justify the desertion of such a friend and counsellor, to whom so much was due,—aged and infirm as he appears to have been,—we cannot determine; much less can we suppose, that his severe speeches were then *dealed about* with greater freedom, than in former years of his residence at Streatham. Those to *one person*, indeed, excepted, who was not *once* so high a favourite! But of this enough.

The volume concludes with two characters of Johnson, the one in verse, and the other in prose. The former is the best, though it is, perhaps, rather too epigrammatic. The latter, like the rest of the book, is confused and desultory, and is written with a negligence of method and arrangement, which ill suits with the true spirit of biography.

The style, indeed, of the whole is unequal: sometimes elegant, forcible, and decorated; at other times inaccurate, ungraceful, and degraded by the introduction of *vulgarisms*. *Said I*, and *said he*, occur too frequently; and we are wearied with the inelegant usage of the particle *how*, instead of *that*, which deforms almost every *tenth* page. The introduction of the Gallicism *one* should likewise have been avoided.

The reader will also be often disgusted with *egotisms*, and our Authoress's repeated mention of herself and her travels. Several passages also in the body of the work, ought to have formed part of the preface.[1] Among the glaring inaccuracies, the following may be pointed out for correction: p. 19, which every body has heard as well as *me*—*Read*, as I. P. 111, when my husband called him away—received an answer—*Read*, HE received. P. 265, Who he often complained of—*Read*, of WHOM he often complained.

One observation more, and we shall conclude. Our Authoress observes, in the *Preface*, that it will be *difficult for those* who complain, that she has *not spoken highly enough of Dr. Johnson, to speak more highly*.—If she means to refer to her account of his *piety*, *virtue*, and *learning*, we agree with her; but *these words* can apply to *no other part* of his character, as it is described in these *Anecdotes;* —and we fancy, that neither the world in general, nor Dr. Johnson's friends in particular, will feel very grateful to any writer, whether male or female, who shall select, as objects of their praise, only such of his qualities as receive the commendation even of his adversaries!

In this collection we have, in a continued series, the correspondence that passed between Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, from the 13th of August 1765 (the date of his first letter), to the 8th of July 1784, in answer to one from that Lady, in which she announces herself no longer Mrs. Thrale, but the then new-married wife of Mr. Piozzi.

April 1788 Vol. 78 p. 324[2]

[1] Particularly in p. 222, 241, 249, 269.

[2] Art. XIII. *Letters to and from Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* To which are added some Poems never before printed. Published from the original MSS. in the Possession of Hester Lynch Piozzi. 8vo. 2 vols. 12*s*. Boards. Cadell, &c. 1788.

During this whole time, a period of about nineteen years, Dr. Johnson lived, for the most part, under Mrs. Thrale's roof. The Lady, and her former husband (who appears to have been a very excellent man), were not only proud to have Johnson as their guest, but they both entertained the warmest friendship for him. That friendship is here seen in its first seeds, and its gradual advancement to maturity. On the part of Mr. Thrale it never ceased, till his heart could beat no more. In Johnson's mind, we see that it had taken a deep root: he continued to lament the loss of Mr. Thrale, and he thought of him, upon all occasions, with esteem and regret. To the surviving widow, and her children, he appears inviolably attached. His letters to Mrs. Thrale are continued with unremitting attention, and they are often in the language of the heart, full of esteem for her talents, admiration of her wit, and the sincerest gratitude for all her kindness.

Had not Johnson left a name, that, since his death, has sounded far and near, it is true that this publication might have been spared. For what can be expected in letters, which conveyed the news from Streatham to Bolt-court in Fleet-street, and from Bolt-court back again to Streatham? Sometimes Johnson wrote from Oxford, and incidentally mentioned Dr. Adams, Dr. Wheeler, Dr. Scott, and a few others; and in the autumn, frequently from Litchfield, and Ashbourne in Derbyshire. When at those two last places, we have heard of Lucy Porter, *a little discoloured by hoary virginity*, of Mrs. Aston, and Green the apothecary, his topics seem to have been exhausted. At Ashbourne we have a glimpse of Dr. Taylor; and when we have read about his bull, and his cows, and *the heir apparent of the bull, who promises to inherit all the bulk, and all the virtues of his sire*, the place seems to afford, in all the subsequent years, little more than a repetition of the same subject.

At Ashbourne the most material occurrence seems to be that of the man who wanted to take one of Dr. Taylor's farms; but he told the Doctor, that he had seen a bigger bull than his. Do you think, says Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, that he will get the farm? In a subsequent letter he says,

"We yet hate the man who had seen a bigger bull than ours." This may be a lesson in the practice of life, not to thwart the ruling passion of those who have favours in their power.

Of letter-writing Johnson gives his idea, which we shall collect from different passages:

"We keep writing to each other, when, by the confession of both, there is nothing to be said, and yet I find it pleasing to write.—When you read my letter, I suppose you are very proud to think how much you excel in the correspondence; but you must remember, that your materials are better. You have a family, and friends, and hopes and fears, and wishes and aversions, and all the ingredients that are necessary to the composition of a letter. Here sit poor I, with nothing but my own solitary individuality; doing little, and suffering no more than I have often suffered; hearing nothing that I can repeat; seeing nothing that I can relate; talking, when I do talk, to those whom you cannot regard; and at this moment hearing the curfew, which you cannot hear."—In another place he says, "To sit down so often with nothing to say; to say something so often, almost without consciousness of saying, and without any remembrance of having said, is a power of which I will not violate my modesty by boasting: but I do not believe that every body has it. Some, when they write to their friends, are all affection; some are wise and sententious; some strain their powers for efforts of gaiety; some write news, and some write secrets: but to make a letter without affection, without wisdom, without gaiety, without news, and without secrets, is doubtless the great epistolic style. There is a pleasure in corresponding with a friend, where doubt and mistrust have no place, and every thing is said as it is thought. These are the letters by which souls are united, and by which minds, naturally in unison, move each other, as they are moved themselves. Let me know where you are, how you got thither, how you live there, and every thing else that one friend loves to know of another."

Such is the account of the Letters before us. No general questions of science or criticism are discussed in the course

of this correspondence: there is little that can be said to be interesting; and yet we are obliged to Mrs. Piozzi for the publication. We here see Dr. Johnson, as it were, behind the curtain, and not preparing to figure on the stage; retired from the eye of the world, and not knowing that what he was then doing would ever be brought to light. We see him in his undress; that is, the undress of his mind, which, unlike that of his body, was never slovenly. It is true, that his words are now and then too gigantesque for familiar letters: he talks of waters, whose stream is obstructed by *protuberances*, and *exasperated by reverberation;* but pompous words were natural to him, as well in conversation as in the Rambler. He said every thing as he thought, and always in his own style. The value, therefore, of these Letters, is, that we have the man before us for near twenty years; we see him in health and in sickness, and in all the petty business of life. From himself, and in his own words, we are enabled to collect the truest and best information. The caricature of Sir John Hawkins may now give way to a better picture; better even than that which Sir Joshua Reynolds has given of himself, because Johnson, when he here gave his own picture, was not doing it by design.

That his constitution was bad, is too evident from the account of himself for twenty years before his death. The narrative of illness cannot be very pleasing: it contains repeated accounts of physic, valerian, opiates, bleeding, fasting, voraciousness, strawberries and cream, opium, the tea-pot, custard, and abstinence. Of this, much might have been spared in the present edition; and we wonder it was not spared, as Mrs. Piozzi, in one of her letters, says, she will talk no more of her own sickness, *because such letters are no better than the labels affixed to vials by an apothecary's boy.*

But Johnson's character comes out fully in this collection. His temper, and the ebbs and flows of his spirits, are thus described. Talking of Baretti, he says, "To be frank, he thinks is to be cynical, and to be independent, rude. Forgive him; because of this behaviour, I am afraid, he learned part of me." In another place: "Every

man has his genius; and have not you observed, that my genius is always in extremes; very noisy, or very silent; very gloomy, or very merry; very sour, or very kind? And would not you have me follow my genius, when it leads me sometimes to voracity, and sometimes to abstinence?"

That in a moral and religious man the fear of death should have been, at all times, so predominant, has been matter of wonder with all who have heard of Johnson. We have this confirmed by his own account. We find, scattered up and down in his letters, the following passages, with others of the same kind:

"On death we cannot always be thinking, and I suppose we need not. The thought is very dreadful! I have lived a life, which I do not like to review: surely I shall in time live better.—The return of my birth-day, if I remember it, fills me with thoughts which it seems to be the general care of humanity to escape. I can now look back upon three score and four years, in which little has been done, and little has been enjoyed; a life diversified by misery; spent part in the sluggishness of penury, and part under the violence of pain; in gloomy discontent, or importunate distress. But, perhaps, I am better than I should have been, if I had been less afflicted. I am hoping, and I am praying, that I may live better in the time to come, whether long or short, than I have yet lived; and in the solace of this hope I endeavour to repose."

Mrs. Piozzi writes to him, that she is glad he is in motion: exercise, and some difficulties, may keep the fancy from playing foolish tricks: She bids him remember, that Honesty and Hopeful got over the river better than Christian and Muchafraid, in the Pilgrim's Progress. But nothing could appease his fear of the king of terrors. He says,

"My two chemical friends died within this month: I have known Worthington long, and to die is dreadful! The frequency of death, to those who look on it in the leisure of Arcadia, is very dreadful. I am spiritless, infirm, sleepless, and solitary; looking back with sorrow, and forward with terror. You know I never thought con-

fidence, with respect to futurity, any part of the character of a brave, a wise, or a good man. Bravery has no place where it can avail nothing. Wisdom impresses strongly the consciousness of those faults, of which it is itself perhaps an aggravation; and goodness always wishing to be better, and imputing every deficiency to criminal negligence, and every fault to voluntary corruption, never dares to suppose the condition of forgiveness fulfilled, nor what is wanting in the crime supplied by penitence. Of him, who cannot rank himself among the best, such must be his dread of the approaching trial, as will leave him little attention to the opinions of those whom he is leaving for ever; and the serenity that is not felt, it can be no virtue to feign."

Such were the scruples of Johnson, and such the arguments by which he confirmed them! He says to Mrs. Thrale, "Write to me no more about dying with *grace:* when you feel what I have felt in approaching eternity, you will know the folly." The Lady, however, ventures once more to advise him on the subject: "If courage is a noble and generous quality, let us exert it to the last, and at the last. If faith is a Christian virtue, let us willingly receive and accept that support it will most surely bestow; and do permit me to repeat those words, with which I know not why you were displeased: *Let us leave behind us the best example that we can.*" This is surely sound philosophy, and it is to be regretted that Johnson did not, or perhaps from constitutional defect could not, adopt it. His scruples continued, and his fear of death haunted his imagination to the last: it stuck to his last sand.

Notwithstanding these gloomy apprehensions, his mind was at times brightened with gaiety. Hear how he advises Mrs. Thrale about mixing with the world, and going to the *Regatta:*

"I have just had your sweet letter, and am glad that you are to be at the regatta. You know how little I love to have you left out of any shining part of life. You will see a show with philosophic superiority, and therefore may see it safely. It is easy to talk of sitting at home contented, when others are seeing or making shows. But

not to have been where it is supposed, and seldom supposed falsely, that all would go if they could; to be able to say nothing, when every one is talking; to have no opinion, when every one is judging; to hear exclamations of rapture, without power to depress; to listen to falsehoods, without right to contradict; is, after all, a state of temporary inferiority, in which the mind is rather hardened by stubbornness, than supported by fortitude. If the world be worth winning, let us enjoy it: if it is to be despised, let us despise it by conviction. But the world is not to be despised, but as it is compared with something better. Company is in itself better than solitude, and pleasure better than indolence. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, says the moral as well as the natural philosopher. By doing nothing, and by knowing nothing, no power of doing good can be obtained. He must mingle with the world that desires to be useful. Every new scene impresses new ideas, enriches the imagination, and enlarges the power of reason, by new topics of comparison. You that have seen the regatta will have images, which we who miss it must want, and no intellectual images are without use. But when you are in this scene of splendour and gaiety, do not let one of your fits of negligence steal upon you. *Hoc age* is the great rule, whether you are stating the expences of your family, learning science or duty from a folio, or floating on the Thames in a fancied dress."

It has been said of Johnson, that his sight was so imperfect, as to make it probable that he never saw the face of his wife. But the following passages were surely written by a man, who saw, and could distinguish:

"Our journey was, for many miles, along a military way, upon the banks of Lough Ness, a water about eighteen miles long, but not I think half a mile broad. The rock, out of which the road was cut, was covered with birch trees, fern, and heath. The lake below was beating its bank by a gentle wind, and the rocks beyond the water on the right stood sometimes horrid and wild, and sometimes opened into a kind of bay, in which there was a spot of cultivated ground, yellow with corn." [1] In another

[1] See also his description of the Staffordshire Canal, Letter 34.

place, he says of a lady, "She dresses her head very high, and has manners so lady-like, that I wish her head-dress was lower." And again, at Aberdeen, "they shewed their libraries, which were not very splendid, but some manuscripts were so exquisitely penned, that I wished my dear mistress to have seen them."

Johnson's benevolence and extensive charity are well known, but seen, perhaps, in no instance so much as in his domestic behaviour. His situation in his own house, amidst his contentious inmates, was far from pleasant, as appears in his description of the people about him. "We have tolerable concord at home, but no love. Williams hates every body: Levet hates Desmoulines, and does not love Williams. Desmoulines hates them both. Poll loves none of them."—"Discord and discontent reign in my humble habitation, as in the palaces of monarchs. Mr. Levet and Mrs. Desmoulines have vowed eternal hate. Levet is the more insidious, and wants me to turn her out."—"Discord keeps her residence in this habitation, but she has for some time been silent: we have much malice, but no mischief. Levet is rather a friend to Williams, because he hates Desmoulines more. A thing that he should hate more than Desmoulines, is not to be found. There is as much malignity amongst us, as can well subsist without any thought of daggers or poisons."—"Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulines have had a scold, and Williams was going away, but I bid her not turn tail, and she came back, and rather got the upper hand. Mr. Levet, who thinks his ancient rights invaded, stands at bay, fierce as ten furies." And yet with these people Johnson continued to live: they were poor, and he therefore endured them: he even continued to love both Williams and Levet till the last. What his benevolence was may be collected from the following short but beautiful description of a female, who had, it seems, a cancer in her breast: "She called on me, on Saturday last, with that fond and tender application, which is natural to misery, when it looks at every body for that help which no body can give."

That he had strong and lively sentiments of friendship and gratitude nobody can doubt, who reads the various

passages in the letters before us, where he expresses his regard for the Thrale family, and his sense of their goodness.

" To be without friendship, is to be without one of the first comforts of our present state. To have no assistance from other minds in resolving doubts, in appeasing scruples, in balancing deliberations, is a very wretched destitution. Life has, upon the whole, fallen short, very short, of my early expectation : but the acquisition of such a friendship at an age when new friendships are seldom acquired, is something better than the general course of things gives a man a right to expect. I think on it with great delight, and I am not very apt to be delighted."—" I find nothing to withdraw my affection from that place, which your kindness and Mr. Thrale's allows me to call my home."—" Though I propose to come home to-morrow, I could not omit to tell you how much I think myself favoured by your notice. Every man desires to keep those friends, whom he is proud to have gained ; and I count the friendship of your house among the felicities of life."

To Mrs. Thrale he says, " To see and hear you, is always to hear wit, and see virtue." His letters on the death of Mrs. Salusbury (mother of Mrs. Piozzi), and of Mr. Thrale's eldest son, are at once moral and pathetic. They flow from a man who loved them, and the surviving family. His solicitude for Mr. Thrale during a long illness, and his feelings at his death, do honour to the memory of Mr. Thrale, and to Johnson's gratitude and sensibility :

" No death since that of my wife has ever oppressed me like this. But let us remember, that we are in the hands of him, who knows when to give and when to take away ; who will look upon us with mercy through all our variations of existence, and who invites to call on him in the day of trouble. Call upon him in this great revolution of life, and call with confidence. You will there find comfort for the past, and support for the future. He that has given you happiness in marriage, to a degree of which, without personal knowledge, I should have thought the description fabulous, can give you another mode of happiness as a mother, and at last, the happiness of losing all temporal cares in the thoughts of an eternity in heaven."

—He adds, "I am afraid of thinking what I have lost: I never had such a friend before."

Johnson's friendship for Mrs. Thrale continued without interruption, on his part, to the last letter that he wrote to her. He seems, at times, to think that her regard for him is abated, and a letter of kindness from that lady appears to have revived and comforted him. After lamenting the loss of Williams and Levet, he says, "Such society I had with them; and such I had—where I am never likely to have it more. When I came to 'love and honour,' in your letter, I said to myself, 'How lov'd, how honour'd once, avails me not.' Shall we never again exchange our thoughts by the fireside?"

His last letter, 8th July 1784, is directed to Mrs. *Piozzi*, who had then announced her marriage to him. He says, "I breathe out one sigh more of tenderness, perhaps useless, but at least sincere." He gives her his best advice, and adds, "The tears stand in my eyes!"

In this review of Dr. Johnson's Letters, we are glad to find the picture, which, without intending it, he has left of himself, to be that of a man, who, to great intellectual powers, added extraordinary piety, and many excellent moral qualities. That such a man had friends, who honoured him, and were ready with their assistance, if occasion required it, no one will wonder. Of Lord Thurlow's generous offer the world has heard, and that nobleman rose by it in the esteem of mankind. Such actions give a lustre to talents and high station. Lord Somers is honoured to this day as the patron of Addison, and the present Chancellor, as the friend of Johnson. One instance more may be added. We find in these Letters, that a friend sent to Johnson's physician to enquire whether his long train of illness had brought him into any difficulties for want of money, with an invitation to send to him for what occasion required. "Since you cannot guess," says Johnson, "I will tell you that the generous man was Gerard Hamilton. I returned him a very thankful and respectful letter." These are the actions that do honour to human nature.

We have made very few quotations from Mrs. Thrale's

Letters, but in justice to that lady we must say, that they are written with elegance and vivacity, and that they exhibit a mind enriched with literature, and provided with a plentiful store of images. Our business was chiefly with Johnson; and after seeing him struggle with illness and morbid melancholy, it refreshes our imagination to hear him say, almost at the close of life, "Attention and respect give pleasure, however late, or however useless. But they are not useless, even when they are late: it is reasonable to rejoice, as the day declines, to find that it has been spent with the approbation of mankind."

Dec. 1786 Vol. 75 p. 455[1]

In this Essay, we have a sober and candid *Review* of Dr. Johnson's literary and personal character. The judicious Author allows all his excellencies to their full extent; but he is not blind to his imperfections. He communicates, indeed, to the Public, little that is new; but he adverts, with strict attention, to whatever has been advanced by the various biographers, and the numerous relators of anecdotes concerning this great and singular man,—this *noble Heteroclite*, as some one hath, not unaptly, styled him.

After a series of just criticisms on Dr. Johnson's writings, throughout, interspersed with occasional remarks on his genius, principles, prejudices, &c., our Author, in the conclusion of his Essay, thus briefly *sketches*, to use his own expression, the *principal features* of the Doctor's character:

"He possessed extraordinary powers of understanding, which were much cultivated by study, and still more by meditation and reflection. His memory was remarkably retentive, his imagination uncommonly vigorous, and his judgment keen and penetrating. He had a strong sense of the importance of religion; his piety was sincere, and sometimes ardent; and his zeal for the interests of virtue was often manifested in his conversation and in his writings. The same energy, which was displayed in his literary productions, was exhibited also in his conversation, which

[1] Art. VII. *An Essay on the Life, Character, and Writings, of* Dr. Samuel Johnson. By Joseph Towers, LL.D. 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. Dilly. 1786.

was various, striking, and instructive; and, perhaps, no man ever equalled him for nervous and pointed repartees.

"The great originality which sometimes appeared in his conceptions, and the perspicuity and force with which he delivered them, greatly enhanced the value of his conversation; and the remarks that he delivered received additional weight from the strength of his voice, and the solemnity of his manner. He was conscious of his own superiority; and when in company with literary men, or with those with whom there was any possibility of rivalship or competition, this consciousness was too apparent. With inferiors, and those who readily admitted all his claims, he was often mild and gentle: but to others, such was often the arrogance of his manners, that the endurance of it required no ordinary degree of patience. He was very dextrous at argumentation; and, when his reasonings were not solid, they were at least artful and plausible. His retorts were so powerful, that his friends and acquaintance were generally cautious of entering the lists against him; and the ready acquiescence of those with whom he associated, in his opinions and assertions, probably rendered him more dogmatic than he might otherwise have been. With those, however, whom he loved, and with whom he was familiar, he was sometimes cheerful and sprightly, and sometimes indulged himself in sallies of wit and pleasantry. He spent much of his time, especially in his latter years, in conversation: and seems to have had such an aversion to being left without company, as was somewhat extraordinary in a man possessed of such intellectual powers, and whose understanding had been so highly cultivated.

"He sometimes discovered much impetuosity and irritability of temper, and was too ready to take offence at others: but when concessions were made, he was easily appeased. For those from whom he had received kindness in the earlier part of his life, he seemed ever to retain a particular regard, and manifested much gratitude towards those by whom he had at any time been benefited. He was soon offended with pertness, or ignorance; but he sometimes seemed to be conscious of having answered

the questions of others with too much roughness; and was then desirous to discover more gentleness of temper, and to communicate information with more suavity of manners. When not under the influence of personal pique, of pride, or of religious or political prejudices, he seems to have had great ardour of benevolence; and, on some occasions, he gave very signal proofs of generosity and humanity.

" He was naturally melancholy, and his views of human life appear to have been habitually gloomy. This appears in his *Rasselas*, and in many passages of his writings. It was also a striking part of the character of Dr. Johnson, that with powers of mind that did honour to human nature, he had weaknesses and prejudices that seemed suited only to the lowest of the species. His piety was strongly tinctured with superstition; and we are astonished to find the author of the Rambler expressing serious concern, because he had put milk into his tea on a Good Friday. His custom of praying for the dead, though unsupported by reason or by scripture, was a less irrational superstition. Indeed, one of the great features of Johnson's character, was a degree of bigotry, both in politics and in religion, which is now seldom to be met with in persons of a cultivated understanding. Few other men could have been found, in the present age, whose political bigotry would have led them to style the celebrated John Hampden 'the zealot of rebellion'; and the religious bigotry of the man, who, when at Edinburgh, would not go to hear Dr. Robertson preach, because he would not be present at a Presbyterian assembly, is not easily to be paralleled in this age, and in this country. His habitual incredulity with respect to facts, of which there was no reasonable ground for doubt, as stated by Mrs. Piozzi, and which was remarked by Hogarth, was also a singular trait in his character; and especially when contrasted with his superstitious credulity on other occasions. To the close of life, he was not only occupied in forming schemes of religious reformation, but even to a very late period of it, he seems to have been solicitous to apply himself to study with renewed diligence and vigour. It is remarkable, that, in his sixty-fourth

year, he attempted to learn the Low Dutch language; and, in his sixty-seventh year, he made a resolution to apply himself 'vigorously to study, particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues.'

"The faults and the foibles of JOHNSON, whatever they were, are now descended with him to the grave; but his virtues should be the object of our imitation. His works, with all their defects, are a most valuable and important accession to the literature of England. His political writings will probably be little read, on any other account than for the dignity and energy of his style; but his Dictionary, his moral essays, and his productions in polite literature, will convey useful instruction, and elegant entertainment, as long as the language in which they are written shall be understood; and give him a just claim to a distinguished rank among the best and ablest writers that England has produced."

We shall conclude this article with another, but *more brief*, sketch of Dr. Johnson's character, struck out, *currente calamo*, a few years before his death, by a celebrated *northern* writer, in a familiar letter to a literary friend:

"I think not highly of his learning, but very highly of his understanding; as a critic he is to be read with caution: his strong sense often directs him right; he is then great; but his prejudices often mislead his judgment: in his temper he is benevolent, in his life charitable to an extreme; in his writings he is sour, contemptuous, and malignant: with these faults, if he had not great virtues, he would be insufferable; with these virtues, if he had not great faults, he would be highly respectable: nay, with all his faults he must be respected."

April 1787 Vol. 76 p. 273[1]

Sir John Hawkins informs us, that, at the request of some of Dr. Johnson's friends, he has taken upon himself the office of his Editor; and, accordingly, he presents to the Public as complete a collection as he was able to form, with the assistance of directions left, for that purpose, by

[1] Art. I. *The Works of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D., with his Life, and Notes on his Lives of the Poets, by Sir John Hawkins, Knt. 8vo. 11 vols. 3*l.* 6*s.* Boards. Buckland, Rivington, Payne, Cadell, etc., etc., 1787.

the Author. The work is dedicated to his Majesty, but, we think, without feeling or sentiment. Lest any one should imagine that either of the two former Princes of his Majesty's illustrious name is here intended, we are told, that it is *George the Third*, and for our further information, it is added, that he is king of Great Britain. Of this king it is said, that *his royal bounty raised the Author from a state of indigence to the enjoyment of learned leisure, and an exemption from worldly solicitude.*

Johnson was one of the highest literary ornaments of his Majesty's reign: in the year 1762, when the pension was granted, he had finished his Dictionary, the Rambler, the Idler, Rasselas, and the best of his works: he had enriched the world with his labours, but had made no provision for himself. If at that period, when he was advanced in years, with a mind fatigued, and a constitution visibly declining, the royal munificence sought so valuable an author in his obscure retreat in the Inner Temple Lane, the bounty, so conferred, is at once an honour to the King that granted, and to the Man that deserved it. Ideas of this kind might have kindled in the Dedication a spark of fire; but at present we must remain content with a meagre account, implying no more than that his Majesty relieved distress, and maintained a beggar. Through every period, in which letters flourished, it is the glory of the reigning prince, that he was the friend and protector of men of genius: Augustus Cæsar, and Louis XIV. are, for their attention to the arts, respected at this day: Virgil and Horace reflect a lustre on the former; Racine and Boileau do honour to the last; and Johnson will repay George the Third with the praise of future times, for the stipend he received.

The Dedication is followed by The Life of Johnson, amounting to one entire volume of six hundred and two pages. In the progress of this work, Sir John Hawkins throws out, in great abundance, his opinions upon various subjects, with the lives of other men, some well-known, and others of inferior fame. He favours us with a list of Authors by profession, and of physicians, who have failed, or succeeded. He talks at large of Mr. Cave (the founder

of the Gentleman's Magazine), of Lord Chesterfield, Fielding, Richardson, Paul Whitehead, the members of doctor Johnson's club at the Chop-house in Ivy Lane; of music, politics, legal decisions, and the arches of Blackfriars bridge. He remembered, perhaps, that Warburton promised to the memory of Pope a JUST VOLUME: a similar task (though Warburton broke his word) he seems determined to perform for Dr. Johnson: but whether so much miscellaneous and foreign matter can be deemed JUST to the person whom he commemorates, may well be made a question. When a favourite topic, or a name familiar to him, comes in his way, he flies off, for five or ten pages, sometimes more; and, during this excursion of thought, we lose sight of the proper object. In the dawn of tragedy, the Greeks said, "What is all this to *Bacchus?*" and we, in the midst of Sir John's wanderings, are inclined to say, "What is all this to Johnson?" In the perusal of this work, we confess, that we found ourselves often under the painful necessity of reading what did not interest, because it is misplaced. *Nunc non erat his locus.* We thought of the story-teller in Foote's farce, who begins with one subject, and as new ideas start up in his mind, distracts you with wild variety, and indeed every thing but that which he professed to tell in the outset. Unity of design is the first beauty in every species of composition, and from the Biographer, who undertakes to give an interesting life, the Reader expects it. If the mind of the Writer, or his commonplace book, be full of fragments, let him, like Bayle, discharge himself in notes, which may be perused at leisure, without breaking the thread of the narration.

In order to guide the Reader through the maze, which Sir John Hawkins has so elaborately formed, we shall endeavour to find a proper clue. The course we shall take is this: we shall first give the life, presenting doctor Johnson in one continued and uninterrupted tenor: we shall afterward, in another article,[1] present the opinions, maxims, and reflections of Sir John Hawkins, together with his

[1] Some observations on Johnson's Works, will be the subject of a *third* Article.

lives and anecdotes of other men, and all his miscellaneous matter, under the title of an Appendix to

THE LIFE OF DOCTOR SAMUEL JOHNSON

This extraordinary man was born at Lichfield, on the 7th of September, 1709. His father, Michael Johnson, was a bookseller in that city. His mother was the sister of doctor Ford, a physician of eminence, and of Cornelius Ford, otherwise parson Ford, the same who, being chaplain to the earl of Chesterfield, wished to attend that nobleman in the same capacity on his embassy to the Hague. Colley Cibber relates the anecdote: You should go, said the witty peer, if to your many vices you could add one more: Pray, my lord—what is that? Hypocrisy, my dear doctor. Johnson had a younger brother, Nathaniel, who died at the age of 27, or 28. Michael Johnson, the father, had a brother of the name of Andrew, who kept the Ring in Smithfield, appropriated to wrestlers and boxers, for a whole year, and as Johnson used to say, was never thrown or conquered. Johnson's father was, more than once, bailiff, or chief magistrate of Lichfield, and, as Sir John Hawkins expresses it, discharged the duties of that EXALTED *station* with honour and applause. He was, like a number of others in that part of the world, a Jacobite, and, no doubt, gave an early tincture of the same principles to the mind of his son. Michael, the father, died, at the age of 76, of an inflammatory fever; and the mother at eighty-nine, of a gradual decay, in the year 1759.

Samuel Johnson derived from his parents, or from an unwholesome nurse, the distemper called the king's evil. Jacobites at that time believed in the efficacy of the royal touch: accordingly Mrs. Johnson presented her son before *queen Anne*, who, for the first time, performed that office, and gave her young patient as much of her healing quality as she could dispense. Johnson remembered something of this; he had a confused idea of a lady in diamonds and a black hood. The seeds of Jacobitism were thus early sown, and in a mind like his, it is not to be wondered if they struck their roots deeply,

and grew with his growth. It is probable that he continued in those principles till he despaired of the cause. He was cut for the evil, and his face, naturally rugged, was seamed and disfigured. It is supposed that this disorder deprived him of the sight of his left eye, and also impaired his hearing. He never remembered to have enjoyed the use of the left eye.

At the age of three years, he trod, by accident (as we are told), upon one of a brood of eleven ducks, and killed it: he is said, upon that occasion, to have made the following verses:

> Here lies good master duck,
> That Samuel Johnson trod on,
> If it had liv'd 'twould have been good luck,
> There then had been an odd one.

Every great genius must begin with a prodigy, and this is scarcely exceeded by the bees on Plato's lip, or the doves that covered the infant poet with leaves and flowers: for how should a child of three years old make regular verses, and in alternate rhyme? The father, moreover, foretold that he would be a great man.

At a proper age he was placed in the free-school at Lichfield. He was not remarkable for diligence: in the fields with his schoolfellows, he talked more with himself than his companions, and was never remarkable for a tenacious memory. In 1725 he went on a visit to his uncle Cornelius Ford, who detained him for some months, and in the mean time assisted him in the classics. After this he was placed at another school at Stourbridge in Worcestershire, and thence returned to his father's house, as seems probable, to be trained up a bookseller. He used to say that he could bind a book. On the 31st October 1728, he went as an assistant in the studies of a young man, of the name of Corbett, to Pembroke college, Oxford. Corbett was entered as a gentleman commoner, and Johnson as a commoner. The college tutor, named Jordan, was a man of mean abilities. Johnson being fined for not attending his lectures, said, "Sir, you have sconced me *two pence* for non-attendance at a lecture not worth a

penny." Corbett left the university in about two years, and Johnson's salary ceased. Being now straightened in his circumstances, his poverty was too apparent. He had but one pair of shoes, and his feet appeared through them. A new pair being placed, by order of a friend, at his door, he threw them away with indignation. His tutor, Jordan, went off to a college living, and was succeeded by the present Dr. Adams, now at the head of the college, and much esteemed for his learning and his talents. Under such a master, Johnson became more regular in his attendance. Ethics, theology, and classical literature were his studies. He projected a common-place book, to the extent of six folio volumes, but, says Sir John Hawkins, the blank leaves far exceed the written ones. At the university, his mind received an early impression of piety, and a taste for the best authors, antient and modern. Of that wandering disposition of mind, which followed him through life, he discovered early symptoms. His reading was desultory, and always by fits and starts. His studies were not directed to any particular science. General philology was the object of his ambition. The management of his time he never practised; nor did he regard the hours of study, more than was required by the discipline of the college. He joined the young men in hunting the servitor, who at stated times knocked at the room doors, to know if the students were within. One of his schoolfellows thought that there was something wrong in his constitution, which would end in the total loss of his understanding or his health, but, happily for mankind, he was not a true prophet. Notwithstanding all these appearances of wildness, Johnson read to great advantage. For a task imposed upon him, he translated the Messiah of Pope; who saw the performance through the means of doctor Arbuthnot's son, and in strong terms declared his approbation of it.

Johnson continued at Oxford from the 31st of October, 1728, to December 1729, when, for want of pecuniary supplies, he left the place; but, having obtained the assistance of a friend, returned in a short time, and in the whole completed a residence of three years. Wonders are told

of his memory, and, indeed, all, who knew him late in life, can witness that he retained that faculty in the greatest vigour.

From the university, Johnson returned to his father's house at Lichfield. Notwithstanding the natural ferocity of his temper, he had the highest respect for the clergy. From contempt of the Sacerdotal order, he thought the transition easy to a contempt of religion. His father died in December 1731, and in the month of March following, Johnson became under-master, or usher, of a grammar school at Market-Bosworth in Leicestershire. Of this school, Sir Wolstan Dixie was the patron. Johnson was disgusted by this gentleman's pride, and, in the July following, left the place, ever after speaking of it with abhorrence. It appears by a memorandum in his own handwriting, dated 15th June, 1732, that his whole receipt out of his father's effects was no more than 20*l*. In June 1733, he resided with a person of the name of Jarvis, at Birmingham. At this place he translated, from the French, a Voyage to Abyssinia, written originally by Jerome Lobo, a Portuguese jesuit, and containing a narrative of the endeavours of a company of missionaries to attract the people of Abyssinia to the church of Rome. A further account of the missionary and the inhabitants of the country will be seen in the Appendix, which we propose to add to this extract. At present we are unwilling to lose sight of our hero.

The translation of Lobo was published in 8vo. by a Birmingham bookseller: what price Johnson had for it does not appear. In February 1734 he returned to Lichfield, and in August following, published proposals for printing by subscription, an edition of the Latin poems of Politian, with the history of Latin poetry, from the æra of Petrarch to the time of Politian; and also the life of Politian, to be added by the editor; the work to be printed in 30 8vo. sheets, price 5*s*. For want of encouragement, the project was heard of no more.

Johnson, it seems, now intended to become an author by profession. To this, Sir John Hawkins appears to have some very nice and squeamish objections. He points

to a distinction between the man, who writes with a view to profit, and him, who, regardless of money, follows the impulse of his genius. He seems to wonder that Johnson did not enter into the refinement of his notions, but, on the contrary, owned no genuine motive for writing, other than necessity. The delicacy of Sir John Hawkins may be easily appeased. The Author, who with intent to profit by his labour, does nothing but what is fair and moral, if he writes well, confers a benefit on mankind, and is honourably employed. Horace has long ago said, *Paupertas impulit audax ut versus facerem.* Racine, Boileau, Corneille, Moliere, Addison, Congreve, Pope, and others, may be added to the list. If Sir John will answer to himself one question, his doubts will vanish : if a man takes 200*l.* for his work, from what impulse does he write ?

In the year 1734, Johnson, in prosecution of his design, made a tender of his services to Mr. Cave, the proprietor of the Gentleman's magazine. His letter upon this occasion is as follows :

November 25, 1734.

" Sir,

" As you appear no less sensible than your readers of the defect of your poetical article, you will not be displeased, if, in order to the improvement of it, I communicate to you the sentiments of a person, who will undertake, on reasonable terms, sometimes to fill a column.

" His opinion is, that the public would not give you a bad reception, if, beside the current wit of the month, which a critical examination would generally reduce to a narrow compass, you admitted, not only poems, inscriptions, etc., never printed before, which he will sometimes supply you with, but likewise short literary dissertations in Latin or English ; critical remarks on authors, ancient or modern ; forgotten poems that deserve revival, loose pieces, like Floyer's, worth preserving. By this method, your literary article, for so it might be called, will, he thinks, be better recommended to the public, than by low jests, awkward buffoonery, or the dull scurrilities of either party.

" If such a correspondence will be agreeable to you, be pleased to inform me, in two posts, what the conditions

are on which you shall expect it. Your late offer [1] gives me no reason to distrust your generosity. If you engage in any literary projects beside this paper, I have other designs to impart, if I could be secure from having others reap the advantage of what I should hint.

"Your letter, by being directed to S. Smith, to be left at the Castle in Birmingham, Warwickshire, will reach

"YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT." [2]

To this letter Cave returned an answer, dated 2d Dec. 1734, and retained Johnson as a correspondent and contributor to his magazine. Though now engaged with Cave, Johnson thought himself at liberty to look for other employment. Accordingly in 1736, he made overtures to the Rev. Mr. Budworth, master of a grammar school at Brerewood, in Staffordshire, and formerly a pupil of Mr. Blackwell, at Market Bosworth, to become his assistant. This proposition did not succeed. Mr. Budworth apprehended that the convulsive motions, to which Johnson was even at that time subject, might be an object of ridicule to his scholars, and of course lessen their respect for the master. Johnson being now about the age of 27, married Mrs. Porter, the widow of a mercer at Birmingham. She was worth about 800*l*., which to a person in Johnson's circumstances made it a desirable match. Of her beauty and personal charms Johnson was an admirer, though his biographer doubts whether he ever saw "the human face divine." He certainly was very short-sighted, but it may be presumed that he approached near enough to his wife, and, when young, perceived distinctly. Garrick and others represented her as a painted doll, of little value, and disguised with affectation.

To turn his wife's fortune to the best advantage, Johnson now projected the scheme of an academy of literature. In this he was encouraged by Mr. Gilbert Walmsley, register of the ecclesiastical court of the bishop of Lich-

[1] A prize of 50*l*. for the best poem on Life, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell.

[2] This letter, and Cave's answer to it, may serve to refute an assertion in an anonymous account of Johnson's life, that he was introduced to the acquaintance of Cave by Savage.

field. Of this gentleman's character Johnson has left a handsome testimonial at the end of the life of Edmund Smith. It appears that, under such patronage, he took a house at a place called *Edial*, near Lichfield. The celebrated Garrick, whose father, captain Garrick, lived at Lichfield, was placed under Johnson's care, by the advice of Walmsley. Garrick was then about the age of eighteen. An accession, however, of seven or eight pupils was the most that could be obtained. To remedy this want of success, the following advertisement was published: "At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young Gentlemen are boarded, and taught the Latin and Greek languages by Samuel Johnson." Vide Gentleman's Magazine 1736, p. 418. The plan, notwithstanding, proved abortive.

It appears, upon good authority, that in March 1737, Johnson and Garrick were fellow travellers on horseback, and arrived in London together. A letter from Mr. Walmsley, though it has not the date of the year, bears every appearance of being written upon this occasion. It is directed to the Rev. Mr. Colson, a celebrated mathematician, and is in the following terms:

LICHFIELD, *March* 2.

"DEAR SIR,

"I had the favour of yours, and am extremely obliged to you; but cannot say, I had a greater affection for you upon it, than I had before, being long since so much endeared to you, as well by an early friendship, as by your many excellent and valuable qualifications. And, had I a son of my own, it would be my ambition, instead of sending him to the university, to dispose of him as this young gentleman is.

"He and another neighbour of mine, one Mr. S. Johnson, set out this morning for London together. Davy Garrick is to be with you early the next week, and Mr. Johnson to try his fate with a tragedy, and to see to get himself employed in some translation either from the Latin or the French. Johnson is a very good scholar and a poet, and, I have great hopes, will turn out a fine tragedy writer. If it should in any ways *lay* in your way, doubt

not but you would be ready to recommend and assist your countrymen.

"G. WALMSLEY."

The tragedy above mentioned was, most probably, *Mahomet and Irene*, which was acted at Drury-lane in January or February 1749. It is founded upon a passage in Knolles's History of the Turks, a book, which the Reader will recollect, has been since highly praised and recommended in the Rambler.

It does not appear that Mrs Johnson attended her husband in this his first visit to the metropolis. The stock of money which Johnson and Garrick brought with them, was soon exhausted. For immediate relief, they borrowed of Mr. Wilcox, a bookseller in the Strand, five pounds upon their joint note. The money was punctually repaid. Johnson now wished to engage more closely with Cave, the publisher of the Gentleman's Magazine. For this purpose he wrote the following letter:

"GREENWICH, NEXT DOOR TO THE GOLDEN HEART,
"CHURCH-STREET, *July* 12, 1737.

"SIR,

"Having observed in your papers very uncommon offers of encouragement to men of letters, I have chosen, being a stranger in London, to communicate to you the following design, which, I hope, if you join in it, will be of advantage to both of us.

"The History of the Council of Trent, having been lately translated into French, and published with large notes by Dr. Le Courayer, the reputation of that book is so much revived in England, that it is presumed a new translation of it from the Italian, together with Le Courayer's notes from the French, could not fail of a favourable reception.

"If it be answered that the history is already in English, it must be remembered that there was the same objection against Le Courayer's undertaking, with this disadvantage, that the French had a version by one of their best translators, whereas you cannot read three pages of the English history without discovering that the style is capable of great improvements; but whether those improvements

are to be expected from this attempt, you must judge from the specimen, which, if you approve the proposal, I shall submit to your examination.

" Suppose the merit of the versions equal, we may hope that the addition of the notes will turn the balance in our favour, considering the reputation of the annotator.

" Be pleased to favour me with a speedy answer, if you are not willing to engage in this scheme; and appoint me a day to wait on you, if you are. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

" Sam. Johnson."

In consequence of this letter, Johnson and Cave were drawn into a closer intimacy. Garrick now professed his intention to embark as an actor, and, to give Cave a specimen of his talents, acted in the room over St. John's Gate (where Cave lived) the character of the Mock Doctor.

Of Cave's character it is unnecessary to say any thing in this place, as doctor Johnson has given the life of that extraordinary man. Bred to no profession, without relations, friends, or interest, Johnson was now an adventurer in the wide world. The arts of insinuation he did not understand; with his natural roughness, approaching to ferocity, he rather chose to display his parts, at the risk of being thought arrogant, than to wait either for patronage or the recommendation of friends. With all the asperity of his manners, from which many revolted, he felt the tender sensations of pity, friendship, and compassion, in a most eminent degree. He related to a mixed company the singular fate of doctor Nicholas Hodges, who, during the plague in London, in 1665, was almost the only physician who staid in London, and offered his art to the spreading contagion. After this extraordinary effort of virtue, that very man died a prisoner for debt in Ludgate. His biographer heard him tell this anecdote with tears ready to start from his eyes: " Such a man, he said, would not have been suffered to perish in these times."

Johnson had been commended by Pope for his translation of the Messiah into Latin verse: but he knew no approach to so eminent a man. With one, however, who was connected with Pope, he became acquainted at St.

John's Gate, and that person was no other than the well-known Richard Savage. Of this man, Johnson has written the life with great elegance, and depth of moral reflection. Sir John Hawkins tells us that Savage took off his hat with a good air, and made a graceful bow. These charms, he says, might operate upon Johnson, who had not been used to genteel company; but if, according to the biographer's notion, he never saw the face of his wife, how should he perceive the graces of Savage? Johnson commenced an intimacy with this extraordinary person. Both had great parts, and they were equally under the pressure of want. They had a fellow-feeling, and sympathy united them closer. Johnson has been often heard to tell, that he and Savage walked round Grosvenor-square till four in the morning, in the course of their conversation reforming the world, dethroning princes, establishing new forms of government, giving laws to different states; and when at last fatigued with their legislative office, they wanted refreshment, both together could not make up more than the sum of four-pence halfpenny. With this man, Johnson lived in intimacy till the beginning of 1738, when Savage, upon the strength of a subscription raised by his friends (chiefly by Mr. Pope), was to retire from the vices of the Metropolis to Swansea in Wales. About this time Johnson finished his Imitation of the third satire of Juvenal; the first lines anticipate the retreat of his friend Savage:

> Resolv'd at length from vice and London far
> To breathe in distant fields a purer air,
> And fix'd on Cambria's solitary shore,
> Give to St. David one true Briton more.

This poem, when finished, was offered to Cave, as appears by the following letters:

"Sir,

"When I took the liberty of writing to you a few days ago, I did not expect a repetition of the same pleasure so soon, for a pleasure I shall always think it to converse in any manner with an ingenious and candid man; but

having the inclosed poem in my hands to dispose of for the benefit of the Author (of whose abilities I shall say nothing since I send you his performance), I believed I could not procure more advantageous terms from any person than from you, who have so much distinguished yourself by your generous encouragement of poetry, and whose judgment of that art, nothing but your commendation of my trifle can give me any occasion to call in question. I do not doubt but you will look over this poem with another eye, and reward it in a different manner from a mercenary bookseller, who counts the lines he is to purchase, and considers nothing but the bulk. I cannot help taking notice that, besides what the author may hope for on account of his abilities, he has likewise another claim to your regard, as he lies at present under very disadvantageous circumstances of fortune. I beg, therefore, that you will favour me with a letter to-morrow, that I may know what you can afford to allow him, that he may either part with it to you, or find out (which I do not expect) some other way more to his satisfaction.

"I have only to add, that I am sensible I have transcribed it very coarsely, which, after having altered it, I was obliged to do, I will, if you please to transmit the sheets from the press, correct it for you, and will take the trouble of altering any stroke of satire which you may dislike.

"By exerting on this occasion your usual generosity, you will not only encourage learning, and relieve distress, but (though it be, in comparison of the other motives, of very small account) oblige, in a very sensible manner, Sir, your very humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

"Monday, No. 6, Castle-street.

"Sir,

"I am to return you thanks for the present you were so kind to send me, and to entreat that you will be pleased to inform me, by the penny-post, whether you resolve to print the poem. If you please to send it me by the post, with a note to Dodsley, I will go and read the lines to him, that we may have his consent to put his name in the title-page. As to the printing, if it can be set immediately about, I will be so much the author's friend, as not to content myself with mere solicitations in his

favour. I propose, if my calculation be near the truth, to engage for the reimbursement of all that you shall lose by an impression of 500, provided, as you very generously propose, that the profit if any, be set aside for the Author's use, excepting the present you made, which, if he be a gainer, it is fit he should repay. I beg you will let one of your servants write an exact account of the expense of such an impression, and send it with the poem, that I may know what I engage for. I am very sensible, from your generosity on this occasion, of your regard to learning, even in its unhappiest state; and cannot but think such a temper deserving of the gratitude of those, who suffer so often from a contrary disposition.

"I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

It happened, however, that the late Mr. Dodsley became the purchaser, at the price, as his biographer thinks, of 50*l.* If Pope was importunate to know the Author of the piece, the secret, which Dodsley knew, would not have remained concealed, especially when the discovery might have been of the greatest advantage to Mr. Johnson: Pope, however, said he would not be long concealed: for this remark he did not need to recollect what Milton said of a beautiful woman, "Whoever thou art, thou canst not long be concealed"; because Terence had said long before, *Ubi, ubi est, diu celari non potest.* Sir John Hawkins adds, that Johnson, in this poem, has adopted the vulgar topics of the time, to gratify the malevolence of a faction: this is dogmatically said, but we hope not to pay court to any person, or party, of the present day. Johnson heated his mind with the ardour of Juvenal, and he wrote with the spirit and energy of a fine poet, and a sharp accuser of the times.

As Dodsley kept the secret, it is no wonder that Johnson gained no patronage by his poem. If he wrote for a faction, as his biographer thinks, that faction would have embraced, with open arms, a man so eminently qualified to serve their views. No such thing happened. Johnson, with all the fame of his poetry, went in August 1738, to offer himself a candidate for the mastership of the school

at Appleby in Leicestershire, which happened then to be vacant. The statutes of the place required, that the person chosen, should be a master of arts. To remove this objection, he found means to obtain the interest of the late lord Gower with a friend of his lordship's, in order to procure for Johnson a master's degree in the university of Dublin, by the recommendation of doctor Swift. This expedient failed. There is reason to think, that Swift declined to meddle in the business; and to this circumstance, Johnson's known dislike of Swift has been often imputed.

Johnson, thus disappointed, returned to London, and published proposals for a translation of Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent, in two volumes quarto: twelve sheets of the work were printed off; but a like design being offered to the Public, from another quarter, under the patronage of doctor Zachary Pearce, both attempts were frustrated. Of Johnson's nothing now remains. His mind, however, was keen, vigorous and active. He formed a multiplicity of projects (of which more in our *Appendix* to his Life), but all were either forestalled by others, or abandoned for want of encouragement. In November 1738, he published, at Cave's a translation of the famous Crousaz's remarks on Pope, bearing the title of " An Examination of Mr. Pope's *Essay on Man:* containing a succinct View of the System of the Fatalists, and a Confutation of their Opinions; with an Illustration of the Doctrine of Free Will, and an Inquiry what View Mr. Pope might have in touching upon the Leibnitzian Philosophy and Fatalism. By Mr. Crousaz, Professor of Philosophy and Mathematics at Lausanne." To this translation Johnson did not set his name. It is well known that Warburton undertook the defence of Pope. There is a letter of Johnson's to Cave, relating to the publication of Crousaz's work, remarkable for the conclusion: " I am, Sir, your's, *Impransus*." If by the expression was meant, that he had *not dined*, because he had not the means, who can read it, even at this hour, without an aching heart?

In 1739, Johnson joined in the clamour against Sir Robert Walpole. He published a pamphlet, intitled,

"MARMOR NORFOLCIENSE, or an Essay on an ancient prophetical Inscription, in Monkish Rhyme, lately discovered near Lynn in Norfolk; by *Probus Britannicus*." This piece, according to the Biographer's account, abounds with Jacobitism, rails at standing armies, and complains that the Hanover horse was sucking the blood of the British lion. A warrant was issued, and messengers were employed to apprehend the author, who, it seems, was known. To elude his pursuers, he retired with his wife to Lambeth Marsh, and there lay concealed in an obscure lodging, till the storm subsided. Before his biographer brought this matter to light, we did not know that Johnson had ever been so unworthily employed.

In the same year, 1739, the licenser of theatrical pieces forbad the representation of a tragedy, called Gustavus Vasa, by Henry Brooke. To justify the rejection of this play, Sir John Hawkins selects a few passages, not one of which would give umbrage at this day. If Sir John's notions of a seditious libel are such as he himself represents, it is well for mankind that he is no longer Chairman of the Quarter-sessions. Johnson wrote a pamphlet on this occasion: it was called "*A Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage from the malicious and scandalous Aspersions of Mr. Brooke, Author of Gustavus Vasa*," 4to. 1739. Under the mask of irony, it was a factious invective: but of this piece, and the *Marmor Norfolciense* (which we have never seen), the biographer says, that they have neither learning nor wit, nor a single ray of that genius, which has since blazed forth. Peace be to their manes!

About the end of 1739, a subscription was completed for Savage, who was to retire to Swansea. Johnson then lodged at Greenwich, and there parted with the companion of his midnight rambles, never to see him more. This separation was, perhaps, a real advantage to Johnson. In the company of Savage he loved wine and strong liquors, and, perhaps, from an example so contagious, contracted that delight in midnight hours, and many other habits, which through the rest of his life he was not able to conquer. His abstinence from wine and strong liquors began soon after the loss of Savage, and continued from that time,

with little variation, to the end of his life. But indolence and dissipation of time still prevailed. He never went to rest at regular hours, nor could he, with all his efforts, rise at eight. During his connection with Savage, a short separation took place between Johnson and his wife: they were, however, soon brought together again. Johnson loved her, and shewed his affection in various modes of gallantry, which Garrick used to mimic. The affectation of fashionable airs did not sit easy on Johnson: his gallantry was received by the wife with the flutter of a coquette; and both, we may believe, exposed themselves to ridicule.

Hitherto Johnson lodged for the greatest part of his time in Exeter-street, behind Exeter change in the Strand. Though he solicited Cave in 1734, yet the Magazine was provided with such various assistance, that he was not sufficiently employed. He gave the lives of Boerhaave, Blake, Barratier, and others. He wrote also, for the Magazine, the Life of Father Paul, an abridgment, as it seems, of what he intended to prefix to the History of the Council of Trent. In order to gain, if possible, the friendship of Cave, he addressed to him a Latin Ode, upon the subject of the many competitors which the Gentleman's Magazine had to struggle with. The two first lines of this very beautiful Ode,

> Urbane, nullis fesse laboribus,
> Urbane, nullis victe calumniis—

put us in mind of Casimir's Ode to Pope Urban:

> Urbane regum maxime, maxime
> Urbane Vatum, etc.

The Polish poet was, probably, at that time in Johnson's hands.

From the year 1736 the opposition to the Minister had encouraged Cave to give the Parliamentary Debates in his Magazine. Guthrie was the person employed for this purpose. In 1740–1 Johnson succeeded to that department. The eloquence, the force of argument, and the splendour of language, displayed in the several speeches, are well known, and universally admired. We cannot

refrain, in this place, from the insertion of an anecdote, which we can relate upon good authority. Dr. Johnson, Mr. Wedderburn (now Lord Loughborough), Dr. Francis (the translator of Horace), Mr. Murphy, the late Mr. Chetwyn, and several other gentlemen, dined with Mr. Foote. After dinner, an important debate, toward the end of Sir Robert Walpole's administration, being mentioned, Doctor Francis observed, that Mr. Pitt's speech, upon that occasion, was the best he had ever read. He had been employed, he added, during a number of years, in the study of Demosthenes, and had finished a translation of that celebrated orator, with all the decorations of style and language within the reach of his capacity. Many of the company remembered the debate, and several passages were cited from the speech, with the approbation and applause of all present. During the ardour of the conversation, Johnson remained silent. When the warmth of praise subsided, he opened with these words: "That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter-street." The company was struck with astonishment. After staring at each other, for some time, in silent amaze, Dr. Francis asked how that speech could be written by him. "Sir," said Johnson, "I wrote it in Exeter-street: I never was in the gallery of the House of Commons but once: Cave had interest with the doorkeepers: he and the persons employed under him got admittance: they brought away the subject of discussion, the names of the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, together with notes of the various arguments adduced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterwards communicated to me, and I composed the speeches in the form they now have in the Parliamentary Debates. For the speeches of that period are all reprinted from Cave's Magazine." To this discovery Dr. Francis made answer: "Then, Sir, you have exceeded Demosthenes himself, for to say you have exceeded Francis's Demosthenes would be nothing." The rest of the company were lavish of their compliments to Johnson: one, in particular, praised his impartiality, observing that he had dealt out reason and eloquence with an equal hand to both parties. "That is not quite true, Sir," said Johnson; "I saved

appearances well enough, but I took care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it." The sale of the Magazine was greatly increased by the Parliamentary Debates, which were continued by Johnson till near the end of 1743. From that time they were written by Dr. Hawkesworth to the year 1760.

In 1743 or 4, Osborne the Bookseller, who kept a shop in Gray's Inn, ventured to purchase the Earl of Oxford's library, at the price of 13,000*l.* He projected a catalogue in five octavo volumes, at five shillings each. Johnson was employed in this painful and laborious drudgery. He was likewise to select from the many thousand volumes, of which the library consisted, all such minor tracts and fugitive pieces, as were in any degree worth preserving, with intent to reprint and publish the whole in a collection, called the Harleian Miscellany. The catalogue was completed, and the Harleian Miscellany was, in 1749, published in eight quarto volumes. That Johnson should be thus employed in a work fit for a day-labourer, must give to every reader a painful reflection. He was, during the whole time, a lion in the toils. He paused occasionally to read the book that came to his hands. Osborne thought that such curiosity tended to nothing but delay: he reproached him for his tardiness with all the pride and insolence of a man, who knew that he paid daily wages, and therefore thought that he might assume an unwarrantable superiority. In the course of the dispute, Osborne, with that roughness which was natural to him, in answer to some assertion, bluntly gave the lie. Johnson seized a folio, and knocked the bookseller down. This anecdote has been often told to prove Johnson's ferocity; but merit cannot always take the spurns of the unworthy, with patience and a forbearing spirit.

Having completed Osborne's work, and being released from his service, Johnson published, in February 1744, the life of his unfortunate friend Savage. This is not the place to speak of the work, nor indeed is an account of it necessary. It is in every body's hands, and has been always admired as an elegant piece of biography. The Author had now lived nearly half his days: without

friends or lucrative profession, he had toiled and laboured, yet still, as he himself expresses it, was to provide for the day that was passing over him. Of the profession of an unfriended author, he saw the danger and the difficulties. Amhurst, who had conducted the Craftsman, Savage, Samuel Boyce, and others, who had laboured in literature, without emerging from distress, were recent examples, and clouded his prospect. In the course of his studies, he had formed a list of literary projects, not less than forty-nine articles; but such was his want of encouragement, or the versatility of his temper, that not one of all his schemes was executed. A new undertaking now occurred to him, namely an edition of Shakespeare. As a prelude to this design, he published, in the year 1745, "*Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, with Remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's Edition of Shakespeare, and Proposals for a new Edition by himself.*" This was intended as a specimen of his abilities, and, indeed, the tract has such evident marks of a scholar and a genius, that Warburton, in his own edition, speaks of it in handsome terms. The notice of the Public was, however, not excited; there was no friend to promote a subscription; the project died at that time, to revive at a future period.

A new undertaking was now proposed to Johnson, namely, an English Dictionary, upon an enlarged plan. Several of the most opulent Booksellers had long meditated a work of this kind; Johnson was in the vigour of life, and the agreement was soon adjusted between the parties. Emboldened by this connection with the first Booksellers in town, Johnson now thought it proper to have a better habitation than he had hitherto known. To this time he had lodged with his wife in courts and alleys in and about the Strand and Fleet Street; but now, for the purpose of carrying on his arduous undertaking, and to be near the Printer, he took a house in Gough Square, Fleet Street. He went to work without delay; five or six amanuenses were constantly under his direction. He was now told that the Earl of Chesterfield had spoken favourably of his design. In consequence of this information, he drew up, in 1747, a plan of his Dictionary, and dedicated it to Lord

Chesterfield, then Secretary of State. Mr. Whitehead, afterwards Poet Laureat, was charged with the manuscript, in order to convey it to his Lordship. The result was an invitation from Lord Chesterfield to the Author. A stronger contrast of characters could not be brought together; the nobleman, celebrated for his wit, and thoroughly accomplished in all the modes of politeness and artificial civility; the author, conscious of his own merit, towering in idea above all competition, versed in scholastic logic, but a stranger to all the forms of polite conversation; uncouth, loud, and vociferous. The acquaintance was commenced, but never cemented into friendship. The coalition was too unnatural. Johnson expected a Mecænas, and was disappointed. No patronage, no provision, no assistance followed. Visits were repeated, but the reception was not cordial. Johnson one day was left for a full hour, waiting in an anti-chamber, till a gentleman should retire, and leave his Lordship at leisure. This gentleman was Colley Cibber; Johnson saw him go away, and, fired with indignation, rushed out of the house.

Of the idea which Lord Chesterfield entertained of Johnson, we have a distinct view in the following portrait, delineated in one of his Lordship's letters for the use of his son. The passage is as follows:

"There is a man whose moral character, deep learning, and superior parts, I acknowledge, admire, and respect; but whom it is so impossible for me to love, that I am almost in a fever whenever I am in his company. His figure (without being deformed) seems made to disgrace or ridicule the common structure of the human body. His legs and arms are never in the position which, according to the situation of his body, they ought to be in, but constantly employed in committing acts of hostility upon the graces. He throws any where, but down his throat, whatever he means to drink, and only mangles what he means to carve. Inattentive to all the regards of social life, he mis-times, and mis-places every thing. He disputes with heat, and indiscriminately, mindless of the rank, character, and situation of them with whom he disputes: absolutely ignorant of the several gradations of familiarity

and respect, he is exactly the same to his superiors, his equals, and his inferiors; and therefore by a necessary consequence, absurd to two of the three. Is it possible to love such a man? No. The utmost I can do for him, is, to consider him as a respectable Hottentot."

After the incident of Colley Cibber, Johnson gave up all hopes of patronage. A dedication might pamper his Lordship's vanity, but promised to himself no kind of advantage. He thought that he had received an affront, and in a style of resentment wrote a letter upon the occasion concluding with a formal renunciation for ever of his Lordship's patronage. In his high and decisive tone he used to say, that Lord Chesterfield was a Wit among Lords, and a Lord among Wits. In fact, Johnson was ever ashamed of the transaction, and spoke of it upon all occasions with the greatest contempt.

Soon after the Letter to Lord Chesterfield, Garrick, in conjunction with Lacy, became patentee of Drury-lane playhouse. For the opening of the theatre in Sept. 1747, Johnson wrote, for his friend, the well-known prologue, which, if we except Mr. Pope's to the tragedy of Cato, is, perhaps, the best in the English or any other language. The playhouse being now in the hands of Garrick, Johnson once more thought of his tragedy of Mahomet and Irene, which was his whole stock on his first arrival in town. In the winter 1749 the play was acted, with the advantages of Garrick, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard. Never was there in point of dresses, scenes, and decorations, such a display of eastern magnificence: but, says Sir John Hawkins, "the diction was cold and philosophical; it came from the head of the writer, and reached not the hearts of the hearers." This may be the place to mention the distinction Garrick made between Johnson and Shakespeare; "All that the former writes, comes from his head: when Shakespeare sat down to write, he dipped his pen into his own heart." We shall not here enter on a critical examination of the play; the Author's works will be before us, when we have gone through his life. During the representation of Mahomet and Irene, Johnson was constantly behind the scenes, and, thinking that his

character of an Author required some ornament for his person, he chose, upon that occasion, to decorate himself with a gold-laced waistcoat. The piece did not succeed beyond nine nights: three of them were for the benefit of the Author: what was the amount is not known, but, probably, it was not very considerable, as the profit, that stimulating motive, never invited him to another theatrical attempt.

That the history of an author must be found in his works, is, in general, a true observation; and was never more apparent than in the life before us. Every epoch of Dr. Johnson's life is fixed by his writings. In the beginning of 1740, he published a second imitation of Juvenal, namely of the tenth Satire, under the title of "The Vanity of Human Wishes." It will be sufficient to say, in this place, that the poem has been always held in high esteem. The particular beauties shall be pointed out hereafter. In 1750 a grand-daughter of Milton had a benefit at Drury-lane playhouse, and Johnson wrote the Prologue. In the meantime his Dictionary went on. The sum stipulated with the Booksellers was to be paid, from time to time, as the work proceeded. This was the Author's only support. The intense application, which this vast performance required, deprived him of his favourite pleasures, such as reading in his desultory manner, and the conversation of his friends. To soften, as well as he could, this inconvenience, he had formed, in 1749, a club, that met at Horseman's chop-house in Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row, on every Tuesday evening. The members of this little society were ten in number; namely, Samuel Johnson; Doctor Salter, father of the late Master of the Charter-house; Mr. (he was not then Dr.) Hawkesworth; Mr. Ryland, a merchant; Mr. John Payne, then a bookseller in Paternoster Row; Mr. Samuel Dyer, a learned young man, intended for the dissenting ministry; Dr. William M'Ghie, a Scotch physician; Dr. Edmund Barker, a young physician; Doctor Richard Bathurst, a young physician, and Sir John Hawkins.[1]

[1] A further account of this club will be given in our *Appendix* to this Life.

At this club Johnson made so hearty a meal, that the members believed it to be his dinner. He drank nothing but lemonade. The young Pretender, the rebels in Scotland, and the executions on Tower-hill, were subjects not to be mentioned before him. Dyer was a Shaftsburian philosopher; he had been a pupil of the famous Hutcheson in Scotland, and the moral sense was his rule and principle of virtue. Johnson, says his biographer, was an admirer of Dr. Clarke, and believed with him, that all rational beings are under an obligation to act agreeably to the fitness of things. To those who knew Johnson, we believe this will be perfectly new; but having nothing in view, at present, but the history of his life, we shall reserve the discussion of this point for a future opportunity. Dyer and Johnson used to dispute at this club about the moral sense and the fitness of things; but Johnson was not uniform in his opinions, contending as often for victory as for truth. This infirmity attended him through life. At the club, however, his morbid melancholy had its lucid intervals; but his biographer leaves us to guess, how his companions contrived to dispel the gloom. Johnson, he tells us, would contradict self-evident propositions, such as, that the luxury of this country has increased with its riches, and that the practice of card-playing is more general than heretofore. If such were the topics, who would not labour under a morbid melancholy? Sir John Hawkins tells us, that in the talent of humour there hardly ever was Johnson's equal; but he gives no instance or illustration. That task he leaves to the lively understanding of Mrs. Thrale, or the diligent attention of Mr. Boswell.

While a member of this club at the chop-house in Ivy-lane, Johnson laid the plan of that celebrated paper, the Rambler. It was begun without any participation with his chop-house companions. The first number issued forth on Tuesday, the 26th March, 1749–50; the paper was regularly published on Tuesdays and Saturdays, till the labours of the Rambler concluded on March 17th, 1752. The whole number of essays amounted to two hundred and eight. Sir John Hawkins says, we know with certainty of only four that were not of his own writing; *viz:* No. 30

by Mrs. Catharine Talbot; No. 97, by Mr. Richardson, Author of Clarissa; and Nos. 44 and 100, by Mrs. Carter. This account is not perfectly accurate: the last Number of the Rambler mentions also four billets in the 10th paper; the second letter in the 15th; and the second letter in No. 107. This, it must be owned, was slender assistance.

Of the Ivy-lane Club, the Author, as it seems, made no other use, than to eat beef-steaks with them, to discuss points with Mr. Dyer, and withdraw his mind from the fatigue of his studies. That his chosen companions were not inspired with some occasional essays, is somewhat singular. One would have thought that Horseman himself would have written an essay. Dennis says, genius consists in certain motions of furious joy and pride of soul upon the conception of a great hint: some, he adds, have the motions without the hints; others have the hints without the motions; and a third set have neither the hints nor the motions. In which class are we to place the members of the chop-house club?

The solemn prayer offered up by the Author of the Rambler, invoking the assistance of Heaven during the course of his work, is an instance of his piety.

Of this excellent production, the Rambler, the number sold, on each day, hardly amounted to five hundred; of course, the bookseller, who paid Johnson four guineas a week, did not carry on a successful trade: his generosity and perseverance are to be commended.

We have already said, that meaning here to give his life, we do not intend to interrupt the narration with critical remarks. Of a position, however, advanced by Sir John Hawkins, we cannot avoid taking notice at present. The Biographer says, an eulogium on Knolles's History of the Turks, and a severe censure on the Samson Agonistes, are the only critical essays to be found in the Rambler. If he will revise the Rambler, or even the Table of Contents, he will find no fewer than twenty more. What are the essays on Pastoral Poetry, on Versification, on Tragi-comedy, History, and many others?

In the spring, 1751, while Johnson was engaged in writing the moral papers of the Rambler, he indulged himself

in a frolic of midnight revelry. This was to celebrate the birth of Mrs. Lenox's first literary child, the novel of Harriot Stuart. He drew the members of his Ivy-lane club and others, to the number of twenty, to the Devil Tavern, where Mrs. Lenox and her husband met them. Johnson, after an invocation of the Muses, and some other ceremonies of his own invention, invested the Authoress with a laurel crown. The festivity was protracted till morning, and Johnson, through the night, was a Bacchanalian without the use of wine. Of this frolic no other particulars are told, except that Sir John had the tooth-ache, and went away ashamed to see the sun shine upon his debauch.

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In March 1752, Dr. Johnson felt a severe stroke of affliction, in the death of his wife. Under the care of Mr. Hawkesworth, she was buried at Bromley, and her disconsolate husband wrote a Latin inscription for her tomb, in which he celebrated her beauty. With the singularity of his prayers for *Tetty*, from that time to the end of his life, the world is sufficiently acquainted. By her first husband, Mrs. Johnson left a daughter, near as old as Johnson. Of her second marriage, there was no issue. With Mrs. Ann Williams, a person of extraordinary endowments, and, though blind, of an active and cheerful disposition, Mrs. Johnson had contracted a close intimacy. This friend she recommended to her husband's protection. Mrs. Williams was the daughter of Zachariah Williams, a physician in South Wales. To relieve himself from solitude and melancholy reflections, Johnson took her home to his house in Gough-square. In 1755, Mr. Garrick gave her a benefit, which produced 200*l.*; in 1766, she published a quarto volume of miscellanies,[1] and thereby increased her little stock to 300*l.* This and Johnson's protection supported her through the rest of her life.

We are told that Kitty Fisher left her card at Johnson's house. Those who knew him, will hardly believe this story: for what purpose should he see a woman, whose person was venal? His Biographer, however, acquits

[1] See *Rev.*, vol. xxxiv, p. 355.

him of all amorous passions. He says that Johnson was myops, or near-sighted, and doubts whether he ever had a perception of beauty. If he ever felt the impression, it was from Molly Aston, who is represented as a republican, and a declaimer for public liberty. Upon this lady, Johnson made the two following verses:

Liber ut esse velim suasisti, pulchra Maria:
Ut maneam liber, pulchra Maria, vale.

Which may be thus translated:

Man's born for freedom, Tyrant, we agree:
To gain my freedom, I must fly from thee.

In 1750, one Lauder, of infamous memory, published an "Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns." The Biographer tells us, that Johnson assisted this man, from motives of enmity to the memory of Milton: but it appears, that while Lauder's work was in the press, the proof sheets were submitted to the inspection of the Ivy-lane club. If Johnson approved of the design, it was no longer than while he believed it founded in fact. With the rest of the club he was in one common error. As soon as Dr. Douglas espoused the cause of truth, and with ability that will ever do him honour, dragged the impostor into open day-light, Johnson made ample reparation to the genius of Milton. He convinced Lauder that it would be more for his interest to make a full confession of his guilt, than to stand forth the convicted champion of a lie; and, for this purpose, drew up in the strongest terms, a recantation, which Lauder signed, and published in quarto, addressed to Dr. Douglas, 1751. It is painful to be thus obliged to vindicate Johnson against the insinuations of the man, who has undertaken to be his Editor, and the guardian of his fame.

During the two years in which Johnson entertained the Public with his *Rambler*, the great work of the Dictionary was still carried on, sometimes by slow degrees, and occasionally with vigour. The morbid melancholy, of which he complained early in life, and which was probably caused by that disorder that brought him to the presence

of Queen Anne, returned upon him at intervals, and clouded his understanding. In a short time after the Rambler ceased, Mr. Hawkesworth projected the Adventurer. The first Number was published November 7, 1752, and the paper continued twice a week, till the 9th of March 1754. To this undertaking, Johnson contributed his assistance. All the essays marked T are of his writing. His price was two guineas for each paper. Dr. Joseph Warton's essays are well known. From another quarter, Hawkesworth had some supplies, but that source soon failed. Sir John Hawkins imagines that the person here intended was Dr. Bathurst, one of the Ivy-lane club; but if he will take the trouble to enquire, he will find that the late Bonnell Thornton was, in the beginning of that undertaking, embarked with Dr. Hawkesworth. The connection did not last long, and Thornton set up a new Paper, called the Connoisseur. The proposal for forming the Labours of Hercules into a pantomime, was of Thornton's writing.

When it is considered that Johnson, about the age of 20, drew up the state of his case for an eminent physician in Staffordshire, and received for answer, that the symptoms tended to insanity, who can wonder that he was troubled with melancholy and dejection? And yet the lion was often roused. He wrote by fits and starts, but always with vigour, and the power of genius. He took opium in large quantities, but the effect of it was a renovation of his faculties. His friend Cave died in January 1754. Of this man it is unnecessary to say any thing, because the author of his life has said so much and so well. It was a mortification to Johnson that his old friend did not live to see the triumph of his labours. By the end of the year in which Cave died, the Dictionary was completed, and the close of the work sent to the press. Mr. Andrew Millar received the conclusion of this great undertaking with transports of joy, which he thought proper to express in the following note:

"Andrew Millar sends his compliments to Mr. Samuel Johnson, with the money for the last sheet of copy of the Dictionary, and thanks God he has done with him."

Johnson returned a short and temperate answer:

"Samuel Johnson returns his compliments to Mr. Andrew Millar, and is very glad to find, as he does by his note, that Andrew Millar has the grace to thank God for any thing."

In May 1755, this great work was published. Johnson was desirous that it should appear to come from one, who had obtained academical honours, and, for that purpose, procured, in the preceding Feb. 1755, through the means of his friend, Mr. Thomas Warton, a diploma for a Master's degree from the University of Oxford. Garrick, on this occasion, wrote the following lines:

"Talk of war with a Briton, he'll boldly advance,
That one English soldier will beat ten of France;
Would we alter the boast from the sword to the pen,
Our odds are still greater, still greater our men:
In the deep mines of science though Frenchmen may toil,
Can their strength be compar'd to Locke, Newton, and Boyle?
Let them rally their heroes, send forth all their pow'rs,
Their verse-men and prose-men; then match them with ours:
First Shakespeare and Milton, like Gods in the fight,
Have put their whole drama and epic to flight;
In satires, epistles, and odes, would they cope,
Their numbers retreat before Dryden and Pope;
And Johnson, well-arm'd, like a hero of yore,
Has beat forty French,[1] and will beat forty more."

Lord Chesterfield wrote two essays, in the paper called the World, in a strain of compliment to the author. Johnson treated this civility with disdain: his observation to Garrick, and others, was, "I have sailed a long and difficult voyage round the world of the English language, and does he now send out his cock-boat to tow me into harbour?" Sir Thomas Robinson (commonly called Long Sir Thomas) endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation. He was commissioned to apologize for Lord Chesterfield, and to make a tender of future friendship and patronage. Sir Thomas added, that he himself, were he in greater affluence, would settle an annuity of 500*l.* "Sir," said Johnson, "were the first peer in the kingdom to make me such an offer, I would show him the way downstairs."

Thus we see Johnson proud of himself, and fierce with

[1] The number of the French Academy employed in settling their language.

a spirit of independence. He received, about this time, a polite overture of friendship from Mr. Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe. It does not appear that this invitation was accepted: his pride led him to shun the Great. It may be supposed that for all this ferocity there was some foundation in his finances, and since his Dictionary was finished, that money was to flow in upon him. The reverse was the case. For his subsistence, during the progress of the work, he had received more than his contract, which was 1575*l.* His receipts were produced at a tavern-dinner given by the booksellers, and Johnson had nothing left but the growing fame of his work. The author of a book called *Lexiphames*,[1] endeavoured to blast his laurels, but in vain: the world applauded, and Johnson never replied. His mind, indeed, strained and overlaboured called for an interval of relaxation. He could not, however, afford to be altogether idle. Indolence was natural to him, but his necessities required some exertion of his talent. In or about 1756, he engaged in a publication called the Visitor; and in the subsequent year he became a Reviewer in the Literary Magazine, published by Mr. Newbery, and printed by Faden, who had been also printer of the Rambler. Among the books and monthly publications that passed under his pen, Hanway's Journal attracted his attention. Mr. Hanway, in that work, happened to censure in strong terms the practice of drinking tea, which was Johnson's favourite liquor. Between these two eminent men a controversy ensued concerning the qualities of tea. Mr. Hanway begged quarter till his second edition should appear. Johnson complied; but on the appearance of the second edition, the war was renewed. In the article of tea, Johnson describes himself as a hardened sinner, who had for years diluted his meals with the infusion of that fascinating plant; whose tea-kettle had no time to cool; who with tea solaced the midnight hour, and with tea welcomed the morning. Of Hanway he said, "He is a man whose failings may well be pardoned for his virtues." Of the good Mr. Hanway, Sir

[1] Generally ascribed to Kenrick; but we have heard that the author's name was Campbell.

John Hawkins speaks with more asperity: he had, says the Biographer, a propensity to write books, which for their triteness and inanity, no one can read. The remark, if true, will apply to a great many other writers.

Before we close this year, 1756, we must acquaint the reader with a dreadful misfortune, which marked this unhappy æra. The chop-house club in Ivy-lane was dissolved; some of the members were called to different parts of the world, and Sir John Hawkins found it convenient to spend his evenings at home.

Johnson, however, survived this calamity. His stock of money arising from the Dictionary being exhausted, he quitted his house in Gough-square, and took chambers somewhere in the Temple, and afterwards in Gray's Inn. Mrs. Williams went into lodgings. The booksellers had been for some time projecting a new edition of Shakespeare, and Johnson's name they thought would give celebrity to the work. He closed with their proposals, and subscription tickets were issued out. For undertaking this work, money, he confessed, was the inciting motive: this, and not the desire of fame, he used freely to declare, was the most cogent reason for taking a pen in hand. His friends exerted themselves to promote the subscription, and, in the mean time, he engaged, under the auspices of Mr. Newbery, in a new work, called the Idler, which was published in the Universal Chronicle, a paper set on foot by Mr. Newbery, who was a man of a projecting head, good taste, and great industry. The Idler began on the 15th of April 1758, and closed on the 15th of April 1760. The profits of this work, and the subscriptions taken in for the edition of Shakespeare, together with some sermons for lazy clergymen at a guinea each, were the means by which he supported himself, till May or June 1762, when he was at length delivered from his distress, by a pension of 300*l.* *per annum*, extended to him by the royal bounty.

In 1759, was published Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia. The story current at the time, was, that Johnson wanted to set out on a journey to Lichfield, in order to pay the last offices of filial duty to his mother, who, at the age of 90, was then very near her dissolution. For this purpose,

money was necessary. The late Mr. Dodsley was a man, whose heart at all times melted at distress, and the present occasion awakened sensations of the tenderest kind. He fled to the relief of a man, whom he loved and honoured, and either gave 100*l.* for the book (if it was then written), or advanced the money on the promise of a work that should be deemed equivalent. With this supply, the affectionate son set out for Lichfield, but did not arrive in time to bid the last adieu, and close the eye of a parent whom he loved. He attended the funeral, and returned to London. Rasselas, it is said, was then written, and Mr. Dodsley thought himself amply repaid. This history of the affair, we hope is true, for it does honour both to the Bookseller and the Author. The Biographer's account of Mr. Baretti's being employed to hawk it among the booksellers for the most money, is related upon no better authority than that of hearsay. The character of this work, as expressed by Sir John Hawkins is furious in its kind; "Considered," he said, "as a specimen of our language, it is scarcely to be paralleled." His reason is this, "It is written in a style refined to a degree of immaculate purity, and *displays the whole force of turgid eloquence.*" Is this praise, or is it censure?

The little incident that happened with Foote might be passed over in silence, but since it is brought forward, it may be proper to place it in its true light. A large number of friends, such as Johnson, Mr. Burke, Dr. Joseph Warton, Mr. Thomas Warton, Mr. Murphy, and others, dined at Garrick's at Christmas 1760. Foote was then in Dublin. It was said at table that the modern Aristophanes (as Foote was then called) had been horse-whipped by an apothecary, for taking him off upon the stage. The report occasioned much conversation. "But I wonder," said Garrick, "that any man would show so much resentment to Foote: he has a license or a patent for such liberties: nobody ever thought it *worth his while* to quarrel with him in London."—And I am glad, said Johnson, to find that the man is *rising* in the world. The anecdote was, afterwards, told to Foote, who, in return, gave out that he would in a short time produce the Caliban of literature on

the stage. Being informed of this design, Johnson sent word to Foote, that, the theatre being intended for the reformation of vice, he would go from the boxes on the stage, and correct him before the audience. Foote abandoned the design. No ill-will ensued. Johnson used to say, that for broad-faced mirth, Foote had not his equal.

In June or July 1762, his Majesty, willing to reward literary merit, granted the pension already mentioned, of 300*l.* a year. Sir John Hawkins, perhaps in a hurry to relieve the distresses of his friend, places this transaction in the year 1760, when, he says, Lord Bute was Minister. Lord Bute was not Minister till the rising of the Parliament in 1762. Of this affair, as far as it is known, the real state is as follows: Mr. Wedderburn (now Lord Loughborough) had authority to mention it. He was well acquainted with Johnson, but he had heard much of his fierce independence, and also of the downfall of Osborne the bookseller. He did not know but a folio might be thrown at his own head, and, to avoid all untoward accidents, desired Mr. Murphy, who was intimate with Johnson, to open the matter to him. Mr. Murphy went, without delay, to the Doctor's chambers in the Inner Temple Lane. By due degrees and artful approaches, and after waiting for some time for the *mollia tempora fandi*, the message was disclosed. Johnson was overwhelmed with the tidings. He made a long pause: he asked if it was seriously intended? He fell into profound meditation, and at last his own definition of a pensioner occurred to him. He did not say a syllable about the house of Hanover. It was enough to observe to him that he, at least, did not come within the definition. The result was, he took a short time to consider of it; he desired that Mr. Murphy and he might dine at the Mitre tavern on the following day. The parties met at the appointed hour. The matter was fully discussed and ended in Johnson's acknowledging himself highly honoured by his Majesty's liberal offer. It was then fixed that he was to be dressed the next day at eleven o'clock, when a carriage would be ready to convey him to a house at the west end of the town, where Mr. Wedderburn would meet him, in order to proceed to the Earl of Bute. On

the next day, Mr. Murphy was in the Temple Lane soon after nine: he got Johnson up, and dressed in due time, and saw him set off at eleven. Of the conversation between Lord Bute and Johnson the substance was this: The pension was notified; Johnson expressed his sense of the royal munificence, and thought himself the more highly honoured as the offer was not made to him for having dipped his pen in faction. No, Sir, said Lord Bute; it is not offered to you for having dipped your pen in faction, nor with a desire that you ever should. Sir John Hawkins says, that, after this interview, Johnson was often pressed to wait on Lord Bute, but he never knocked at his door. Of Johnson's intimates there are many living to whom this is entirely new. Certain it is, he was never heard to utter a disrespectful word of that nobleman, Mrs. Piozzi has related a dispute with the late Dr. Rose of Chiswick, about the Scotch and English writers. Dr. Rose contended for the pre-eminence of his countrymen; and Ferguson's book upon Civil Society, he said, would give the laurel to the authors of North Britain. "Alas! what can he do upon that subject? Aristotle, Polybius, Grotius, Puffendorf, and Burlamaqui have been before him." He will treat it, said Dr. Rose, in a new manner.—"A new manner!—Buckinger had no hands, and he wrote his name with his toes, for half a crown a time, at Charing-cross: that was a new manner of writing!" Mrs. Piozzi has omitted the reply. If that will not satisfy you, said Dr. Rose, I will name a writer, whom you must allow to be the best in the kingdom.—"Who is that?"—The Earl of Bute, when he wrote an order for your pension. There, Sir, replied Johnson, you have me in the toil; to Lord Bute I must allow whatever praise you claim for him.—Ingratitude was no part of Johnson's character.

We have now travelled through that part of Dr. Johnson's life which was a perpetual struggle with difficulties. In the whole of this time, we have no account of any acts of generosity or benevolence on the part of his friends. Garrick was in a lucrative profession, that yielded annually a considerable acquisition of wealth. We know from the character of Prospero in the Rambler, No. 200 (explained

by Mrs. Piozzi), that Garrick exhibited his growing wealth and his furniture with ostentation: but we hope that he sometimes opened his heart, not content to tantalise an old friend with the mere display of his riches. If any obligation of this nature ever took place, it has not yet transpired. Being from the year 1762 in possession of a certain income, Johnson began to relax from that exertion to which his mind had been often compelled. His friend Levett, his physician in ordinary, paid his daily visit with assiduity; attended at all hours, made tea all the morning, talked what he had to say, and did not expect an answer; or if occasion required it, was mute, officious, and ever complying. Mrs. Williams entertained her friend and benefactor with more enlarged conversation. Johnson had left his chambers in Temple Lane and was now in a house in Johnson's Court, Fleet Street. There he sat every morning receiving visits, hearing the topics of the day, and indolently trifling away the time. Chemistry afforded some amusement. In Gough Square he had an apparatus for the purpose, and the same, with perhaps a few additions, was now fixed up in his house. In the summer of 1783, when a paralytic stroke affected his utterance, Mr. Murphy, we are told, found him reading Dr. Watson's essays on chemistry. Articulating with difficulty, This is a book, said he, from which he who knows nothing may learn a great deal; and he who knows, will be pleased to see his knowledge recalled to his mind in a manner highly pleasing. For this love of natural experiments, Sir John Hawkins thinks an apology necessary; he tells us very gravely that his object was mere amusement, not an intention to grow suddenly rich by the philosopher's stone, or the transmutation of metals.

To enlarge his circle, and to find opportunities for conversation, Johnson once more had recourse to a club. This was at the Turk's Head in Gerard-street, Soho, on every Monday through the year. The members were, beside himself, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Burke, Dr. Nugent, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Mr. Chamier, and Sir John Hawkins. Garrick, on his return from Italy, wished to be admitted a member, but was never in form

proposed. Johnson, his Biographer says, prevented it, and thence he infers that the friendship between those two eminent men was not so strong as might be supposed. When the same writer afterwards adds, that Garrick was no disquisitor, and that Johnson, who loved philosophical and moral enquiries, was afraid of being interrupted by Garrick's buffoonery, what other cause needs to be assigned ? Johnson, it is well known, loved Garrick, and though he did not often see him on his stage, admired his talents, and the vivacity of his conversation. It is true, that of the art in which Garrick was so eminent, he would often speak in slighting terms : he would say : " Punch has no feelings " : he was ready to vindicate Garrick whenever his name was brought in question, and he would let nobody abuse him but himself. He lamented Garrick's death, and desired it might be signified to Mrs. Garrick, that, if she asked it of him, he would undertake to write his life.

In this course of indolence and occasional amusement, Johnson let his mind lie fallow for two or three years. Shakespeare stood still, and, indeed, the intended edition was never a favourite employment. He was at length roused from his lethargy. In a poem of Churchill's, he saw himself abused for breaking faith with the Public ; and, in the same production, charged with credulity in the affair of the Cock Lane ghost, which happened in 1762. True it is, Johnson would have been glad to see a traveller from that undiscovered country, over which, like the rest of mankind, he saw nothing but clouds and darkness. For this weakness, Churchill ridiculed him : Johnson made no reply, and, indeed, had no occasion. He saw the fraud, and published [1] an account of it. To acquit himself to his subscribers, he returned to Shakespeare, and unwillingly went to work with vigour. In 1765, the edition was published. Sir John Hawkins thinks it a meagre work ; he complains of the paucity of notes ; of Johnson's want of industry, and, indeed, unfitness for the office of a scholiast. He is, further, of opinion, that, because the preface sets forth, in the strongest colourings of language, as well the

[1] In the *Gentleman's Mag.* for Feb. 1762,

beauties of that extraordinary genius, as the defects, that Johnson detracted from the merit of his author. This is not the place to examine the opinions of Sir John Hawkins: our business at present is with Johnson. The University of Dublin, as it should seem, entertained a better idea of Johnson and his abilities. That learned body presented him with a diploma, drawn up in very honourable terms, by which he was created a Doctor of Laws. Oxford afterwards followed this example, and till then, Johnson never assumed the name of Doctor.

In addition to the pension settled upon him in 1762, Johnson had now gained another resource, which contributed perhaps more than any thing else to *exempt him from the solicitudes of life.* In 1764, he had been introduced to the late Mr. Thrale and his family. From Mrs. Thrale's agreeable book we learn, that Mr. Murphy, who had been long the friend and confidential intimate of Mr. Thrale, persuaded him to wish for Johnson's conversation, extolling it in the highest terms. The pretence for inviting him to that family was to give him an opportunity of seeing Woodhouse the shoemaker, whose verses were, at that time, a general topic. Mr. Murphy brought Johnson to meet him, and through the rest of the winter they both dined at Mr. Thrale's every Thursday. In the autumn of that year, Johnson followed the Thrales to Brighthelmstone, but not finding them there, wrote an angry letter. The quarrel was soon made up, and Mr. Murphy brought Johnson back to the family. In 1766 Johnson's health was exceedingly bad. The Thrales visited him: he was begging the prayers of Dr. Delap, that God would continue to him the use of his understanding. He thought himself in a state of insanity. The Thrales took him away to their house at Streatham, and, no doubt, by their care, prolonged his life. He continued from that time a constant resident in the family. He went to town occasionally to the club in Gerard-street, but his head quarters were fixed at Streatham. Sir John Hawkins seems to pity his situation. His words are, "The obligation they subjected him to was that of supporting his character, and furnishing such conversation, as was expected from a man who had dis-

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tinguished himself by his learning, his wit, and his eloquence." Who told him that Johnson was thus put under contribution? To talk in his best manner was a law which he imposed upon himself at all times, and in all places. But his hardship, it seems, was still greater: "Like other men, he had his sombrous intervals, and might, in the hour of repletion, wish for the indulgence of being silent, or, at least, of talking like other men." The Biographer, it is probable, takes a nap upon a full stomach, and waits in slumber for a good digestion: but let him be informed, though Johnson never slept nor snored, that he did, on all occasions, as he liked; and if he talked apothegms, they were not demanded of him.

> . . . non isto vivitur illic
> Quo tu vere modo: domus hac nec purior ulla,
> Nec magis his aliena malis.

It may be further added, that no ill example in the family hindered him from rising at eight: elegance prevailed in the house, but irregularity was never known. The constant difficulty was to draw Johnson from his bed to breakfast, or to get him dressed for dinner. It does not appear that Sir John was ever of the parties that visited Streatham; and since he knows but little of the manner in which Johnson was treated in that house, the reader is referred to those sprightly Memoirs with which Mrs. Piozzi has obliged the world.

The fame of Dr. Johnson raised the curiosity of the King. His Majesty desired to see a man, of whom extraordinary things were said. Accordingly, the librarian invited Johnson to see the collection of books at Buckingham-house. His Majesty entered the room, and among other things asked the author of so many valuable works, if he intended to publish any thing more. The Author modestly answered, that he thought he had written enough: "And so should I too," replied the King, "if you had not written so well."

In 1770, he became a political writer. The flame of discontent that blazed throughout the nation, on the expulsion of Mr. Wilkes, and the final determination of the

House of Commons, that Mr. Luttrel was duly elected by 296 votes against 1143, spread a general alarm. Mr. Thrale was desired to conduct Johnson to an interview with the Minister. The consequence was, that in 1770 he published the False Alarm. Whatever may be the logic or eloquence of the pamphlet, the House of Commons has since erased the resolution from the Journals.

In March 1771 issued forth another tract. The subject was Falkland Islands; and the design of the pamphlet was to shew the impropriety of going to war for a mass of islands and broken lands, of which the soil was nothing but a bog, with no better prospect than that of barren mountains, beaten by storms almost perpetual. For this work it is apparent that materials were furnished by direction of the minister.

At the approach of a general election, in 1774, a small tract called *The Patriot*, was published, not with any visible application to Mr. Wilkes, but to teach the people to reject the leaders of Opposition, who called themselves patriots.

In 1775, Johnson undertook a pamphlet of more importance. This was *Taxation no Tyranny*, in answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. The scope of the argument was, that distant colonies, which had in their assemblies a legislature of their own, were, notwithstanding, liable to be taxed in a British Parliament, where they had neither peers in one house, nor representatives in the other. The principle, which was immediately and vigorously combated in our Review, has been long abandoned: but Johnson was of opinion that this country was strong enough to enforce obedience. "When," says he, "an Englishman is told that the Americans shoot up like a Hydra, he naturally considers how the Hydra was destroyed." The event has shewn how much he was mistaken.

The tour to the Hebrides, or Western Islands of Scotland, in company with Mr. Boswell, took place in 1773. Johnson's account has been variously praised, and abused. Since his death, Mr. Boswell has entertained us with a minute history of his fellow traveller, in a style that shews he possesses, in an eminent degree, the skill to give connec-

tion to miscellaneous matter, and vivacity to the whole of his narrative: two rare qualities in a biographer!

Of the storm that seemed to be gathering about the poems of Ossian, little needs to be said. That work, it is well known, was presented to the public as a translation from the Erse; and that it was no better than a fraud, Dr. Johnson declared his opinion, without reserve. If there was a manuscript, in what age was it written, and where is it? If it was collected from oral recitation in different parts of the Highlands, who put it together in its present form? These and such like observations provoked the resentment of Mr. Macpherson: he sent a threatening letter to the author, and Johnson answered him in the rough phrase of stern defiance. The two heroes frowned at a distance, but never came to action.

The few remaining occurrences may be easily dispatched. The University of Oxford, in 1775, created Johnson a Doctor of Laws, and soon after the publication of the political pamphlet, Mr. Thrale wished to see Johnson in Parliament; but whether an uncouth form, loud vociferation, and a violent temper, would have succeeded in that assembly, may well be a question: Lord North disapproved, and Johnson, it seems, ever after disliked the minister, in whose service he had figured as a political writer.

The misfortune of Dr. Dodd, in 1777, excited Johnson's compassion: he wrote two petitions for that unhappy man, one to the King, another to the Queen: he also wrote a sermon which was preached by Dodd to the convicts in Newgate. What is become of the speech, which Dodd delivered at the Old Bailey, when he was called up for judgment? Sir John has omitted that remarkable composition.

We come now to the last of Johnson's literary labours. At the request of the booksellers, he undertook the Lives of the Poets. The first publication was in 1778, and the whole was completed in the year 1780, or 81. His Biographer doubts whether he possessed all the qualities of a critic, and in particular a truly poetic faculty. For this he gives, in his way, a curious reason. Shakespeare talks of *the poet's eye, in a fine phrenzy rolling*, and Johnson had

no eye to roll and glance. But he had the mind's eye, and with that he was qualified for every subject upon which he exercised his pen. The Lives of the Poets are thought not inferior to any of his other works. In fact they are written upon so just a plan, with such graces of order and connection, and with so comprehensive a brevity, that we wish Sir John Hawkins had studied him, night and day, as the true model of biography.

We now take leave of Johnson as an author. From the close of his last work, the malady that persecuted him through life, came upon him with redoubled force. His constitution declined fast, and the fabric of his mind seemed to be tottering. The contemplation of his approaching end was constantly before his eyes, and the prospect of death, he declared, was terrible. Mr. Thrale died in April 1781, and Johnson, to use his own words, felt the last flutter of his pulse, and saw for the last time that face which for years had looked upon him with benignity. Of his departed friend, he has given a true character in a handsome Latin epitaph, to be seen in the church at Streatham. In 1782, he received another shock: his old friend Levett expired without warning, and without pain. Events like these reminded Johnson of his own mortality. He continued his visits to Mrs. Thrale at Streatham, and it appears that, on the 5th of April 1783, he took his final leave of that lady, to whom, for near twenty years, he was under the highest obligations. In the summer of that year, Johnson had a paralytic stroke, which affected his speech only. By the care of Dr. Brocklesby and Dr. Heberden he recovered in a short time. In the month of August he went to Lichfield, on a visit to Mrs. Lucy Porter, the daughter of his wife by her first husband, and on his return, paid his respects to Dr. Adams at Oxford. Mrs. Williams died at his house in Bolt Court, in September, during his absence. This was another shock to a mind like his, ever agitated with the dread of his own dissolution. He was now left in solitude, with nobody but Frank, the Negroe, his favourite servant, to soothe his anxious moments. In November he was swelled from head to foot with the dropsy. Dr. Brocklesby was again assiduous in

his attendance: but it seems he owed his relief to an extraordinary effort of nature. While with all his fervour he was offering up his adoration and his prayers, he was suddenly obliged to rise, and in the course of the day voided twenty pints of water. From this remarkable event he began to entertain hopes that the vigour of his constitution was not broken. His health was now so much restored, that for the sake of conversing with his friends, he established another club; and to serve a man, whom he had known in Mr. Thrale's service for many years, the place of meeting was fixed at his house in Essex street, near the Temple. Sir John Hawkins says, he was not made privy to this intention; and that it was matter of surprise to him, when he heard of it in Dec. 1783. The Biographer adds, "The more intimate of Johnson's friends looked on this establishment, both as a sorry expedient to kill time, and a degradation of his talents. It was a mortification to polite persons to associate the clink of the tankard with moral disquisitions and literary investigation: and many doubted, whether that pleasure could be great, which was purchased at so cheap a rate as sixpence." Poor Dr. Johnson! He lived his days to be tried at last before a chairman of the Quarter Sessions! but the charge, in general, is so absurd, that, we trust, he will be acquitted upon most of the points, which both tediously and dully are summed up against him. What is his offence? He instituted a club, of which Sir John Hawkins was not a member. We have made inquiry concerning this club, and find that the room is neat, commodious, and detached from the common frequenters of the house, nothing inferior to the chop-house in Ivy-lane. We find, moreover, that there are members, who, for their rank, their talents, and their literature, might claim respect from Sir John Hawkins. *The supercilious lip of scorn should not protrude itself.* The club subsists to this hour, and the gentlemen are far from thinking it a sorry waste of their time. Sir John, being a stranger, cannot be admitted for his three pence[1]; and should his

[1] Sir John says, but erroneously, that strangers might be admitted for three pence.

name be ever associated with literary investigation, the thing *to degrade him* will not be the *clink of the tankard.*

In this club, Dr. Johnson continued till about Midsummer 1784, when, with some appearance of health, he went into Derbyshire, and thence to Lichfield. While he was in that part of the world, his friends in town were labouring for his benefit. Their opinion was, that the air of a more southern climate would be of use. But a pension of 300*l.* was a slender fund. Sir Joshua Reynolds solicited for his friend, the patronage of the Chancellor. With Lord Thurlow, while he was at the bar, Johnson was well acquainted. He said to Mr. Murphy, twenty years ago, "Thurlow is a man of such vigour of mind, that I never knew I was to meet him, but—I was going to tell a falsehood; I was going to say I was afraid of him, and that would not be true, for I was never afraid of any man; but I never knew that I was to meet Thurlow, but I knew I had something to encounter." The Chancellor undertook to recommend Johnson's case, but without success. To save a valuable life, he offered from his own purse 500*l.* Johnson heard of it in the country, and wrote the following letter:

"My Lord,

"After a long and not inattentive observation of mankind, the generosity of your Lordship's offer raises in me not less wonder than gratitude. Bounty, so liberally bestowed, I should gladly receive, if my condition made it necessary, for, to such a mind, who would not be proud to own his obligations? But it has pleased God to restore me to so great a measure of health, that if I should now appropriate so much of a fortune destined to do good, I could not escape from myself the charge of advancing a false claim. My journey to the continent, though I once thought it necessary, was never much encouraged by my physicians; and I was very desirous that your Lordship should be told of it by Sir Joshua Reynolds, as an event very uncertain, for, if I grew much better, I should not be willing, if much worse, I should not be able, to migrate. . . . Your Lordship was first solicited without my knowledge; but, when I was told that you were pleased to honour me with your patronage, I did not expect to hear

of a refusal; yet, as I have had no long time to brood hope, and have not rioted in imaginary opulence, this cold reception has been scarce a disappointment; and, from your Lordship's kindness, I have received a benefit, which only men like you are able to bestow. I shall now live *mihi carior*, with a higher opinion of my own merit.

"I am, my Lord,
"Your Lordship's most obliged,
"Most grateful,
"And most humble servant,
"Sam. Johnson.

"*Sep.* 1784."

We have, in this instance, the exertion of two congenial minds: one with a generous impulse relieving merit in distress, and the other by gratitude and dignity of sentiment rising almost to an equal elevation. Of Dr. Brocklesby it must be said, that, by the offer he made of his assistance, he has done himself immortal honour.

While Dr. Johnson continued at Ashburn in Derbyshire, his disorders began to return. In his way to town he visited his native city, and Mrs. Porter, who lived there, for the last time. On the 16th of November he arrived at his house in Bolt Court, there to end his days. He was now relapsing into a dropsy, and was afflicted with an asthma. Dr. Brocklesby attended him with assiduous care. Eternity presented to his imagination an awful prospect; and with as much virtue as in general is the lot of man, he shuddered at the approach of his dissolution. He felt strong perturbations of mind. His friends endeavoured all in their power to awaken the comfortable reflection of a life well spent. They prayed with him, and Johnson poured out occasionally the warmest effusions of piety and devotion. As his end drew near, his friends had the satisfaction of seeing him cheerful and composed, insomuch that he was able, in the course of his restless nights, to make translations of Greek epigrams, and in the morning to give a copy to Mr. Langton. The love of life was still an active principle. Feeling himself swelled with the dropsy, he imagined that, by incisions in his legs, the

water might be let off. Mr. Cruikshank apprehended that a mortification would follow, but, notwithstanding, yielded to his entreaties. While he was employed in scarifying his legs, Johnson cried out, deeper, deeper; I want length of life, and you fear giving me pain, which I value not. The history of a death-bed is painful. He made his will, and left to Frank, his Negroe servant, 1,500*l*. After this he grew worse, and declined rapidly. On the 13th of Dec. 1784 (the last of his existence on this side the grave) the desire of living returned upon him with all its former vehemence. At eight in the morning he still thought that, by punctures and incisions on his limbs, he might discharge the load of water that oppressed him. For this purpose he made use of a lancet, and afterwards of a pair of scissars. No water was discharged; an effusion of blood followed, not less, as was conjectured, than eight or ten ounces. Sir John Hawkins is anxious to prove that this was not done to hasten his end; but of so moral and religious a man who can admit the suspicion? After this operation, Johnson fell into a doze, and continued in that state till about seven in the evening, when he said to Mr. Sastres, "*Jam moriturus*," and, in a quarter of an hour after, expired without a groan.

On the 20th of December, with due funeral honours, and a numerous attendance of his friends, he was buried in Westminster Abbey, near the foot of Shakespeare's monument, and close to the coffin of his friend Garrick.

We have thus gone through the life of this extraordinary man. From a prodigious quantity of heterogeneous materials, we have endeavoured, in one regular series, to give a clear and uninterrupted narration. The wild variety, which the Biographer has brought together, serves only to distract the attention of the reader, and to counteract that curiosity, which every one feels concerning those, who have made themselves eminent in their day. We have, in six hundred and two pages, a chaos of matter, and Dr. Johnson lies under the load, like the giant buried in Sicily:

Dextra sed angusto manus est subjecta Peloro;
Læva, Pachyne, tibi; Lelybœo crura premuntur;
Degravat Ætna caput.

In our next, by way of Appendix to the Life, we shall examine the maxims, criticisms, anecdotes, and philology which, for the sake of clearness and unity of design, we have been obliged, for the present, entirely to discard.

When we have taken leave of Sir John Hawkins, Dr. Johnson's Works will then be before us. *Major rerum mihi nascitur ordo!*

July 1787 Vol. 77 p. 56

In our Reviews for the months of April and May, we toiled, with great labour, through the long and ponderous life, with which Sir John Hawkins has overloaded the memory of Dr. Johnson. *In all lead*, says the author of "The False Alarm," *there is silver; and in all copper there is gold. But mingled masses are justly denominated from the greater quantity.* In the composition of Sir John, lead is the prevailing ingredient. From the PIG before us, we have, however, endeavoured to extract the few valuable particles, to the end that we might present to our Readers a clear and regular narration, such as, on account of its brevity, might be read with patience, and by its connection, be rendered intelligible. It now remains to examine the heterogeneous matter, which serves no other purpose, than that of bewildering the reader in a maze of intricacy, and of swelling the book to an enormous size. In executing this design, a methodical arrangement will be necessary, to avoid that confusion, into which the Knight would lead us. We shall, therefore, view Sir John in a variety of attitudes, as a *biographer*, an *egotist*, a *relator of facts*, a *book-maker*, a *politician*, a *moralist*, a *critic*, and an *editor*.

To begin with the first, as a *biographer*; Sir John promised to be the guardian of Johnson's fame, and with that intent undertook to write the life of his deceased friend. It may, therefore, be proper to enquire what figure does Johnson make, as here represented; what was his character, his genius, his temper and his conduct in the various incidents of his life. We shall draw into one point of view the several observations, which we find scattered, with wild profusion, through a dull and tedious compilation. According to Sir John Hawkins, Johnson

did not write from the impulse of genius ;—money was his only motive. He wished to excel his contemporaries in literature, and that, we are told (as if the caution were necessary), does not deserve a worse name than that of emulation. He was Myops, and never saw his wife's face, though Mrs. Piozzi says it was astonishing how he remarked minutenesses of dress, such as the accidental position of a Lady's ribband, hat, or tucker. He was marked by a roughness that approached to ferocity. In his imitation of Juvenal, he was the echo of vulgar complaints. He loved wine and a tavern life, and the habits then contracted embittered his reflections to the end of his days. He was not uniform in his opinions, contending more for victory than truth. He wrote the Rambler, because his mind was grown tumid. He was in religion, an enthusiast ; in conversation, captious and dogged. He hated Scotchmen. In the lesser morals, he was always remiss. He slept when he should have studied. A sloven, and in his appearance disgusting. Bishops he respected : but from motives of envy, having been about three years at Oxford, he despised the inferior clergy, conceiving that they usurped, what with better right belonged to himself. When Hawkesworth was made a Doctor of Laws, Johnson quarrelled with his friend. His grief for his wife was a lesson learned by rote, and practised till it became ridiculous. He believed in preternatural agents, and, in his youth, had been a dabler in dæmonology. He had not music in his soul. An habitual sloven, as much as if educated at the Cape of Good Hope. In eating, which he did greedily, he was more a *sensualist* than a *philosopher*. His criticism on the *Samson Agonistes* was prompted by envy. His Imitations of Juvenal might have been made waste paper ; and his Tragedy of *Irene* might well have been damned the first night. He drank tea with an eagerness that marked effeminacy. *Rasselas*, his most applauded work, is by its moral, of little use. He abused the elliptical arches of Blackfriars Bridge because he hated Scotchmen. He talked of good-breeding, but knew nothing of the ritual of behaviour. He recommended persons to credit, who, he knew, neither could nor would

pay their debts. He was not a staid man. He envied Garrick's success, and saw with indignation great rewards bestowed on a player. He was unfit for the office of a scholiast. Those who lent him books, never saw them again. The history of the Hebrides is of no use, and mostly justly condemned for its illiberality. He wrote the Lives of the Poets, in which there is a great deal of sound criticism, though Johnson was not qualified for a critic, not having a true poetic faculty, because he had no eye to roll in a fine phrenzy. His fondness for rhyme was absurd. He had no relish for the music of drums, and pulsatile instruments. He was not a desirable inmate. He punctured his lower limbs ; but he was NOT GUILTY OF SUICIDE.

Such is the picture of the man, as given by the daubing hand of Sir John Hawkins : and it is thus that eminent writer is represented by the guardian of his fame. Could he arise and read this account, where would Sir John hide himself from the indignation of an injured friend ?

As an *egotist*, Sir John makes no inconsiderable figure. For this, he prepares us in the outset, observing, that many writers affect to speak in the third person, but for his part, he chuses to appear in HIS OWN PERSON, and these little EGOTISMS he thinks a grace to his composition. He communicates a great deal concerning himself, but forgets to inform us, that he was originally an Attorney's Clerk, and afterwards a Practiser, with little business. How a Barrister may rise in his profession, he states without reserve ; but the arts by which an Attorney may advance himself, he chuses to conceal. He talks of writing from the impulse of genius, but not a word of the time, when he wrote letters and essays for an evening paper, at the price of half a guinea for every piece that happened to be inserted. He was a member of the chop-house club in Ivy-lane ; was in company with *Warburton*, and dined with *Akenside* at Putney Bowling-green. He was Chairman of the Quarter Sessions at Hick's Hall, and though the Justices of the county were in the commission, every thing was done before HIM, and HIM ONLY : he wrote the history of music, and understands the proportions of architecture. He explained to Johnson the profound

mystery of proving a will at Doctors Commons. He was acquainted with Garrick, and went to him with a law-case, to which Garrick preferred a new pantomime. He has a house at Twickenham, and Garrick often stopped at his door. He had a gardener at Twickenham, who paid no attention to Millar's Dictionary. He kept his own coach, and Johnson was in it several times. Mrs. Cornelys was indicted *before him*, and if the matter had not been made up, she might have been tried *before him*. He actually saw the epitaph on Dr. Goldsmith in Johnson's own handwriting, and therefore knows (what all the world knew) that Johnson was the author of it. He travelled in a stage-coach with the late Mr. Richardson, as far as Parson's Green. He advised Johnson to abandon a man in a spunging-house to his fate, but Johnson was too good-natured, and paid the debt. Bishop Hoadley talked with him about one *Fournier*, who had, by a dextrous forgery, converted the Bishop's frank into a note for 8000*l.*; and in this conversation Hoadley told Sir John, what he had long before told the world,[1] in a pamphlet upon the subject. He hates Negroes, and thinks they ought not to enjoy the benevolence of their masters, nor be permitted to keep their watches, though made residuary legatees: but this dispute with the Black is carefully suppressed.

Such is the account Sir John gives of himself. We will venture to say that P.P. the Parish Clerk in Pope's Miscellany, was not a man of so much self-importance.

As a *relator of facts*, it will be evident from the following instance, how far Sir John is worthy of credit: The late Mr. Millar, he says, upon receipt of the last sheets of the copy of the Dictionary, sent Johnson his money, *with a note*, informing the author, that he *thanked God he had done with him*. This polite card drew an answer from Johnson in the following terms: "Samuel Johnson sends his compliments to Mr. Andrew Millar, and is glad to find, *as he does by his note*, that he has the grace to thank God for any thing." He who reads this, will naturally conclude that the two notes lay before the Biographer. What will

[1] Vid. *Rev.*, vol. xviii, p. 226. The title of the Bishop's narrative was, "A Letter to Clement Chevalier, Esq."

the reader say, when he is told, *that no such notes were ever written?* Mr. Millar was not capable of such deliberate and brutal rudeness. It is true, he sent the money, and said at the same time to the bearer, "Thank God, I have done with Mr. Johnson." That Johnson should be told this, he did not desire: the person, however, who went on the errand, being asked what Millar said, repeated the words, and Johnson answered as above stated. No writing passed between them, nor ought it now to be stated, that Mr. Millar sent an ungrateful and insolent note to an author, who had finished so capital a work. After this, we think, the story of Lord Chesterfield's gross and vulgar behaviour to a lady, for which that accomplished nobleman narrowly escaped being kicked down stairs, will be marked, by every judicious reader, as another instance of the historian's integrity.

In the character of a *book-maker*, the Knight appears to be a more laborious drudge than any of the tribe. He undertook to write the Life of Dr. Johnson, and for this purpose his whole common-place book is disembogued, to shew at once the Author's comprehension, and raise the price of the copy. Hence we have the history of Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia, the origin of taverns, the rise and progress of *Cave's* Magazine, to edify the readers *thereof*, who may be curious about a work, the fame *whereof* has spread far and wide. The portion of history, on which the tragedy of *Irene* was founded, may be a proper insertion, but we should have liked it better in the words of *Knolles* the historian, than in the rumbling style of the modern Biographer. It is to the artifice of book-making that we are indebted for a long digression on the administration of Sir Robert Walpole. No less than four speeches at full length are inserted from the Parliamentary Debates. This is followed by another farrago: the Catalogue of the Harleian printed volumes, with an account of the Harleian Manuscripts, which have been printed in eight quarto volumes, was a lucky expedient to him, who was determined to have no mercy upon paper. What had Johnson to do with Goodman's Fields, or the theatre there? This, however, is added to the rest of the lumber. The history

of Covent Garden playhouse is as little to the purpose, but it serves to put the Knight in mind of the *Licensing Act*, and when once he is upon the scent, lead where it will, he is sure never to be drawn off, till he has hunted down the game. Havard's play of Charles the First, says Sir John, was acted at Goodman's Fields, and gave occasion to the Licensing Act. In this there are two mistakes. In the first place, Havard's play was acted at Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, on the 1st of March 1737. 2dly, There was nothing in the play to provoke the interposition of Government. Sir John should have known, that so far from being obnoxious, it has been twice revived of late years, once for Mr. Reddish's benefit at Drury-lane, and afterwards for that of Mr. Lewis, at Covent Garden, on the 2d of April, 1781. Fielding's Pasquin, which was produced at the little theatre in the Haymarket, might provoke the resentment of the minister ; but it was a play, called the GOLDEN RUMP, that gave the finishing blow to licentiousness. By the Debates in Parliament it appears, that on the 5th March 1734–5, Sir *John Barnard* moved to bring a bill to restrain the number of play-houses, there being then in constant use, the Opera House, the French Playhouse in the Haymarket, the Theatres of Covent Garden, and Drury-lane, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Goodman's Fields. A project was, at the same time, on foot for erecting a new playhouse in the very heart of the city, somewhere in St. Martin's Le Grand. To prevent this last, was the object of Sir John Barnard's motion : a bill was brought in, but for some reason it was soon dropped. Afterwards, in the beginning of the year 1737, the GOLDEN RUMP was offered to Mr *Giffard*, the conductor, at that time, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and proprietor of Goodman's Fields. The play of the *Golden Rump* was found to be a scurrilous libel on Government : *Giffard* was resolved to shew a due regard for decency and the good order of society. He gave up the play to Sir Robert Walpole, or some other person high in office. The Minister, on the 20th May 1737, brought in the bill, which passed into a law, and has continued ever since. In the course of the Debate, to shew how far the licentiousness of the

times was to be carried, Sir Robert produced the *Golden Rump*,[1] and read to the House some of the most offensive passages. The bill was carried through with the utmost dispatch, and (notwithstanding Lord *Chesterfield's* memorable speech against licensing the stage) received the royal assent June 21, 1737. Such is the history of the Licensing Act: Sir John seems unacquainted with it. A regulation was certainly necessary; but Sir Robert, in his wrath, laid the axe to the root of the tree.

> Nor couldst thou, Chesterfield, a tear refuse,
> Thou weptst, and with thee wept each gentle Muse.

Sir John seems to be a more bitter enemy to the stage than even Jeremy Collier: he says, when we are told that the Drama teaches morality, it is mere declamation. A playhouse, and the regions about it, are the hotbeds of vice: his reason is, a Quaker woman was tried *before him*, that is at Hick's Hall, for keeping a bawdy-house. How the courteous Knight will apologize to his Majesty, who grants a patent for the theatre in Drury-lane, and a licence for that in the Haymarket, we cannot conjecture.

After these digressions, it might be expected, that the Biographer would return to Dr. Johnson: but no such thing. Lord Chesterfield must feel the lash of his pen, and hence we have the sweepings of the news-papers to eke out a threadbare, dull invective. Still to swell out the volume, it is not enough that Johnson's admired Prologue, for the opening of Drury-lane theatre, under the auspices of Mr. Garrick, is printed in his works: it must be inserted in his life, and for fear the English reader should not understand an English poem, it must be first translated into dull prose by Sir John Hawkins. The account of Savage, like the rest, is a superfluous excrescence: the reader might have been referred to the Life written by Johnson; but the art of swelling a volume required that it should be otherwise. The late Dr. Birch supplies a world of materials: we are told how he made a perambulation round London, and we have a careful

[1] Many suspected that the *Golden Rump* was purposely written to pave the way for the Licensing Act—a mere political manœuvre of Walpole's.

list of the places he called at: of this we shall only say, that we had rather walk with *Birch*, than sleep over the pages of Sir John. In the course of the work, authors by profession are often mentioned: this affords a lucky opportunity to recollect a number of that class, and this again opens the way to more rambling. Dr. Birch, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Hill, Mr. Richardson, Dr. Smollet, Henry Fielding, Sterne, Amherst, and several others, have left behind them names, which will not soon be forgotten. The abuse of so many eminent writers might help to work off a great deal of gall, and to fill up a number of pages. They are almost every one traduced with the bitterest rancour. It is lucky for the reader that *Archibald Bower* did not present himself to our Biographer's memory. Thirty or forty pages might have been filled up with extracts from the famous controversy between Dr. Douglas and that subtle imposter. To compensate for this loss, a list is given of the members who formed the Ivy-lane club, and a subsequent one in Gerard-street, Soho: with a root of bitterness at the heart, it was easy to rail at almost every one of them. The Knight, accordingly, goes to work. Dr. Salter is the first sacrifice: what friend he has left to defend him, we do not know. The late Dr. Nugent seems to be spared: as there are persons still living, of ability to vindicate his memory, the Knight, perhaps, thought that an attack upon that good man would be attended with danger. Poor Dr. Goldsmith! the late Duke of Northumberland asked him, what service he could do him, during his administration in Ireland. The Doctor recommended his brother, an unbeneficed clergyman in that country. For this generous sentiment, he is called an ideot! Who, that knew the late Mr. *Dyer*, can refrain from lamenting his fate? Sir John *loved him with the affection of a brother*, and he proves his regard, by telling us, that he became the votary of pleasure, and an epicure; insomuch that he was miserable, because he lost his taste for olives. He denied the freedom of the human will, and settled in materialism: it was his maxim, "*that to live in peace with mankind, and in a temper to do good offices, was the most essential part of our duty.*" This is damned

by Sir John Hawkins as heretical doctrine. Mr. Dyer was admired and loved through life; but Sir John assigns to him a detestable character. He was seized with a sore throat, and the disorder was of such peculiar malignity, that the physicians have hardly agreed on its name. Dr. Nugent attended him; he examined with care the parts affected, and after searching as deep as he could, that excellent physician, as soon as he entered the adjoining room, told Mr. Dyer's friends, that the disorder would prove mortal. The patient died in a few days. His friend Sir John will not allow him to rest in peace. He says, it is still a question, whether he *did not die by his own hand.* While there are still living those, who were witnesses to the last melancholy scene of their expiring friend, an insinuation of so cruel a nature should not have been hazarded. If there are others still in being, whom Sir John *loves with the affection of a brother*, they have only to wish, *with an affection for themselves*, that he may not survive to tell their story. Our Readers (if they have not seen this curious piece of biography) may, after all this, begin to hope that there is now an end of Sir John's digressions. In this they will also again be disappointed. As good luck would have it, there were in the Ivy-lane club three physicians, namely Dr. M'Ghie, Dr. Barker, and Dr. Bathurst: they did not succeed in their profession. Here Sir John rambles again: we are ready to cry out, *Quo nunc se proripit ille?* He wanders into a long digression concerning physicians, who succeeded, or failed in their undertaking. In this list, we have *Mead*, *Oldfield*, *Clark*, *Nesbit*, *Lobb*, *Munckley*, *Hulse*, *Hoadley*, and the two *Schombergs*. Concerning these, the Knight's commonplace book is exhausted, and the well known dispute, between the last of the *Schombergs* and the College of physicians, helps to make a great deal of waste paper. Johnson's Rambler being a collection of essays, the opportunity was fair to talk of essay-writers. A number of that description are mentioned; and two, viz. *Gordon* and *Trenchard*, are treated with great severity. On what account? Because, says Sir John, *they were so intoxicated with notions of civil liberty, that they talked of the Majesty*

of the people! It is fit Sir John should be told, that the plant, or rather *weed*, of servitude will not grow in this country. Sir *Robert Filmer* tried his endeavour, but with so little success, that one might imagine no man would be again the advocate of slavery. Has Sir John Hawkins never read the history of the republics of antiquity, which were all founded in freedom? Has he never heard of the majesty of the Roman people? Following this writer through all his wanderings is, we confess, a state of slavery, which we are obliged to go through even in this land of freedom. The detection of *Lauder*, by Dr. Douglas, helps out a dull and tedious narrative, and he writes it, as he says himself, for *the use of posterity*: he means, most probably, *in usum posteriorum*; but, if so, he is a bad translator. The labours of Dr. Douglas in the cause of truth will not be easily forgotten by the lovers of literature. The talents of that able writer will transmit his name to after-times, without the feeble aid of one, who does not promise to be of long duration.

We are sorry to find that Sir John has still more stories in reserve. The person called *Admirable Crichton*, comes in his way, and of this man we have a large collection of wretched anecdotes. The Reader may suppose that he now has done with *authors by profession*; but more pages are still to be filled, without any reference to Dr. Johnson. For this purpose, *Ralph* the historian, *Guthrie*, and *Paul Whitehead*, are summoned by Sir John, to be *tried before him*. The name of *Paul Whitehead* introduces that of *Mr. Doddington* (afterwards Lord Melcombe), and the last, of course, makes room for Dr. *Thompson*. Another lucky incident comes in his way: it happened that Johnson wrote in the news-papers about the arches of Blackfriars bridge. This, to a rambling genius, is an inviting occasion to display his skill in architecture: he talks of proportions; in man, of the sesquioctave of the head, and in woman of the sesquional. All this we have in a work that professes to be the Life of Dr. Johnson: but biography is not the talent of Sir John Hawkins: *Præconem facito, vel architectum.*

The next point of view, in which Sir John presents him-

self, is that of a *politician*: he praises Sir Robert Walpole's administration, and gives at full length Lord Hardwicke's speech against the motion for removing Sir Robert from his Majesty's councils. But he is not content to stop here: Lord Hardwicke's argument, he says, turns upon a fallacy, which the Lords had not penetration to discover. This was reserved for the sagacity of Sir John Hawkins, who is decidedly of opinion, that there was sufficient ground for the motion to remove the minister. Having, in this manner, condemned the administration which he admires, he proceeds to tell all England, that Mr. Pitt, whose eloquence and unequalled ardour raised this country to a pitch of glory never known before, opposed Sir Robert Walpole with *yelping pertinacity*. The expression deserves no other notice, than to say of it, that it was dictated by rank malevolence. Of Sir John's notions of civil liberty, the reader will find a sufficient specimen in the lines, which he cites from GUSTAVUS VASA, to shew that no Government ought to suffer a play so full of sedition and republican sentiments. To prove this position, he selects the following lines, all as harmless as ever fell from the pen of a poet.

> "Is it of fate, that he, who wears a crown,
> Throws off humanity?"

There have been princes, whose history justifies the remark.

> "Beyond the sweeping of the proudest train,
> That shades a monarch's heels, I prize these weeds."

And if he is so inclined, why should he not?

> ". . . our Dalecarlians
> Have oft been known to give the law to kings."

Every nation, not enslaved, does the same: in the power and the right of so doing, consists the MAJESTY OF THE PEOPLE!

> "Divide, and conquer, is the sum of politics."

What is this but a translation of the old maxim, *Divide et impera?*

> ". . . If thou think'st
> That Nature, in the proud behalf of one,
> Shall disenfranchise all her lordly race,
> And bow her gen'ral offspring to the yoke
> Of private domination, &c."

Has Sir John drank so deep of the dregs of slavery, as to think *all made for one?*

> ". . . Thou art the minister,
> The Monitor of vice."

Whenever there is such a minister, off or on the stage, it is fit that he should hear of his iniquity.

There remains one sentiment more, which gives the alarm to Sir John:

> " The fence of virtue is the Chief's best caution;
> And the firm surety of my people's hearts,
> Is all the guard that e'er shall wait *Gustavus*."

Such are the reasons, for which the play of *Gustavus Vasa* is held to be inconsistent with any system of civil subordination. Out of Siberia we could not expect to find so abject and so willing a slave. He laments the decision which pronounced General Warrants illegal, because he thinks they would be of use in hindering artificers from quitting the kingdom. At any rate he is willing to be in a state of slavery.

Sir John next displays himself in the character of a rigid *moralist*: it may not be improper to view him in this capacity. He says, " There are three schools of morality among the moderns: 1st, That of Lord Shaftesbury, who places virtue in a course of action conformable to the moral sense. 2dly, That of Woolaston, who calls it, acting in all cases according to truth, and treating things as they are. 3dly, The school of Dr. Samuel Clarke, who places morality in acting agreeably to the relations that subsist between rational creatures, or the *fitness of things*." Of these three systems, Johnson, we are told, adopted Dr. Clarke's. He agreed with him in

this, and most of his opinions. Now let Johnson speak for himself. In his review of a *Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil*, Dr. Johnson says (*Vide his Works*, vol. x. page 246), "the author offers an account of virtue and vice, for which I have often contended, and which must be embraced by all, who are willing to know why they act, or why they forbear, in order to give any reason of their conduct to themselves or others."

The account, which he admires, is then given at large: we shall here select as much of it as will shew what was Johnson's idea of virtue and vice.

"Various have been the opinions of various authors on the criterion of virtue: some have placed it in conformity to truth, some to the FITNESS OF THINGS, and others to the will of God. But all this is merely superficial: they resolve us not, why TRUTH, or the FITNESS OF THINGS, are either eligible or obligatory; nor why God should require us to act in one manner rather than another. The true reason can possibly be no other than this, because some actions produce happiness, and others misery. They who extol the truth, beauty, and harmony of virtue, exclusive of its consequences, deal but in pompous nonsense; and they who would persuade us, that good and evil are things indifferent, depending wholly on the will of God, do but confound the nature of things, as well as all our notions of God himself. It is the consequence of all human actions that must stamp their value; so far as the general practice of any action tends to produce good, and introduce happiness into the world, so far we may pronounce it virtuous: so much evil as it occasions, such is the degree of vice it contains. But though the production of happiness is the essence of virtue, it is by no means the end. The great end is the probation of mankind, or the giving them an opportunity of exalting or degrading themselves in another state, by their behaviour in the present. And thus it answers two most important purposes, the conservation of our happiness, and the test of our obedience. Nothing could have been so justly rewarded with happiness, as the production of happiness, in conformity to the

will of God. It is this conformity alone, which adds merit to virtue, and constitutes the essential difference between morality and religion. Morality induces men to embrace virtue from prudential considerations; religion from those of gratitude and obedience. The Christian is the only religious or moral institution in the world, that ever set in a right light these two material points, the essence and the end of virtue. So artificially is the nature of all human virtue and vice contrived, that their rewards and punishments are woven, as it were, in their very essence; their immediate effects give us a foretaste of their future; and their fruits, in the present life, are the proper samples of what they must unavoidably produce in another. We have reason given us to distinguish these consequences, and regulate our conduct; and lest that should neglect its post, conscience also is appointed as an instinctive kind of monitor, perpetually to remind us both of our interest and our duty."

The whole passage at length deserves to be seriously perused: we have here contracted it, in order to shew the idea of virtue for which Johnson says he always contended. Doctor Clarke's FITNESS OF THINGS is here pronounced to be merely superficial; and after this, are we to be told that the man, who sides with the doctrine here advanced, was a follower of Dr. Clarke? Virtue would, perhaps, be better referred to the MORAL SENSE of Shaftsbury, than to the FITNESS OF THINGS, and for this plain reason; because few are speculative enough to investigate all the relations that subsist between reasonable beings; and the MORAL SENSE, which, when referred to ourselves, is another word for CONSCIENCE, is planted in all. To Soame Jennings's account of virtue, Johnson subscribes, and always contended for it: it follows, that he did not embrace the system of Dr. Clarke. Under the sanction of Johnson's opinion, Sir John fancies that he has established a certain criterion of virtue: he is determined, therefore, to combat another system, which, he says, was introduced by *Richardson, Fielding*, and *Sterne*. Of the first he says, "He was the introducer of *sentiment* and *sentimentality*, from which

sprung up *Sentimental* Journies, *Sentimental* Letters, and a world of trash, which, but for this silly epithet, would never have attracted notice. The success of this author occasioned a craving for more of the same stuff."

Fielding is also plentifully abused: "TOM JONES was intended to sap the foundations of morality. The author of it resolves virtue into *good affections*: he was the inventor of the cant phrase, *goodness of heart*, which means little more than the *virtue* of a *horse or a dog*." Let Sir John remember (if he does not already feel it) that Fielding has made the hypocrite drop his mask, and has exhibited to ridicule the *plausible formalist*, who talks of the FITNESS OF THINGS, without sentiment, and without that virtue which consists in good affections. *Goodness of heart*, whatever Sir John may say, will always be preferred to the cant of him, who talks of morals with rancour and malignity. STERNE also wrote Sentimental Journies. "Writers of this class," Sir John says, "supersede all moral obligation: they are a law to themselves, and having GOOD HEARTS, are above those considerations that bind men to that rule of conduct which is founded in a sense of duty. Of this new school of morality, ROUSSEAU, FIELDING, and STERNE are the principal teachers, and great is the mischief they have done by their doctrines."

To these profound observations, our answer is, it would be well if Sir John had been their pupil. That root of bitterness, which has *put rancours* in the vessel of his heart, would have been eradicated; and though the impulse of genius might not have been communicated, the man, if not the writer, would have been improved. Good affections are of the essence of virtue: they are the will of God in the heart of man, implanted in our nature to aid and strengthen moral obligation: they incite to action. A sense of benevolence is no less necessary than a sense of duty. *Good affections* are an ornament not only to an author, but to his writings. He who shews himself upon a cold scent for opportunities to bark and snarl, may, if he will, talk of virtue, but GOODNESS OF HEART, or, to use Sir John's polite phrase, *the virtue of a horse or a dog*, would do him more honour.

We are, in the next place, to estimate Sir John's talents in the office of a *critic* ; for this we fear he is little qualified. An acquaintance with the best authors, and an early taste, are necessary ; but those qualifications are not usually acquired at an attorney's desk. *Aristotle* and *Longinus* are better preparatives than the *Statute Book*, or the *Instructor Clericalis*. MILTON, the Knight says, " was a political enthusiast, and, as is evident from his panegyric on Cromwell, a base and abject flatterer. He was acquainted chiefly with men of that crack-brained assembly, called the ROTA CLUB, all republicans ; and his domestic manners were far from amiable ; he was neither a kind husband nor indulgent parent." Thus speaks the cold phlegm of Sir John Hawkins : " But nothing, he says, can apologize for that harsh and groundless censure, which closes the first of Johnson's discourses on the SAMSON AGONISTES, *viz.* that it is a tragedy which ignorance has admired, and bigotry applauded." (*Vide Johnson's Works*, vol. vi. p. 436). It may be asked, Does Sir John know the essential beauties of a just and regular tragedy ? Johnson says, after Aristotle, and sound reason, " A tragedy should begin where it may be intelligible without introduction, and end, where the mind is left in repose, without expectation of any farther event. The intermediate passages must join the last effect to the first cause, by a regular and unbroken concatenation. Nothing must therefore be inserted, which does not apparently arise from something foregoing, and properly make way for something that succeeds it. This is required to the perfection of a tragedy, and is equally necessary to every species of regular composition." These requisites are not to be found in the *Samson Agonistes*. The scenes follow one another, but are not produced by any thing that preceded. *Manoah*, Samson's father, *Dalilah*, the courtezan, and *Harapha*, the giant of *Gath*, enter successively, without any apparent cause, and without any consequential effect. In all this, nothing passes that either hastens or delays the death of Samson. The fable, therefore, is justly condemned ; but it is the fable only that Johnson censures. Of the rest, it is expressly admitted, that " it contains just sentiments,

maxims of wisdom, oracles of piety, and many passages written with the ancient spirit of choral poetry, in which there is a just and pleasing mixture of *Seneca's* moral declamation, with the wild enthusiasm of the Greek writers."

Is this the criticism of a malevolent mind? It is so far otherwise, that it may be ranked among the best pieces of that kind in the English language.

Of the beauty, resulting from a regular chain of causes and effects, Sir John does not appear to have an idea. He thinks a play, like the life of an eminent man, may be written without order or connection; how parts relate to parts, and they to the whole, is a consideration beneath the notice of a confused and wild biographer. Can it be expected that he, whose reading is confined to old homilies and the statute-book, should have a true relish for the beauties of composition? He ventures, notwithstanding, to talk of propriety and elegance of language. He thinks that Johnson owed the excellencies of his style to the divines and others of the last century, such as *Hooker*, *Sanderson*, *Taylor*, and Sir *Thomas Browne*. He would, therefore, have us write at this day as if we lived above a century and a half ago. He adds, that Johnson admired Cowley for the ease and unaffected structure of his sentences. If he did, it is wonderful that he deviated so widely from that elegant model. Cowley is at the head of those who cultivated an easy, clear, and natural style. *Dryden*, *Tillotson*, and *Sir W. Temple* followed. *Addison*, *Swift*, *Pope* (we include the writers of the Spectator), completed the work. Of *Addison*, Johnson used to say, "He is the Raphael of essay writers." Sir John is of a different opinion: Addison he thinks deserving of praise, if we make *his cold and languid periods* the test of elegant composition. Our critic loves the antiquated phrase of the state papers in the *Cabala*, and the *precatory eloquence* of former ages. The characteristics of Addison, he says, are *feebleness* and *inanity*, though his *sentiments are excellent*, and his *humour exquisite*. What does Sir John mean? Where there are sentiment and humour, can there be inanity? He allows, with *Johnson*, that his prose *is the model of the middle style*. The misfortune is,

he thinks the *middle style* and a *middling style* synonimous terms. He does not know, that by the ablest critics style has been distinguished into three modes, the *sublime*, the *simple*, and the *florid*, or *mixed* ; and that the last, holding often the qualities of the two others, is called the *middle style*. Because the last is ascribed to *Addison*, the Knight concludes that *Johnson* meant to call him a *Mediocrist*. The fact is, Johnson had taste enough to relish *Addison*, though he did not copy him. It may be true, that Johnson took an early tincture from the writers of the last century, particularly from Sir Thomas Browne. Hence the peculiarities of his style, new combinations, sentences of an unusual form, and words derived from the learned languages. He did not remember the observation of *Dryden* : " *If too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed, not to assist the natives, but to conquer them.*" It is remarkable that the life of *Savage* is written with ease. The pomp of diction was assumed in the Rambler, and seems to be discarded by Johnson in his latter productions. Sir John most probably acquired his notions of language at his master's desk : he admired the phraseology of deeds and parchments, *whereof*, to speak in his own manner, he read so much, that in consequence *thereof*, he has been chiefly conversant *therein* ; and by the help of the parchments *aforesaid*, he has not much improved *thereby*, but has entirely missed the elegance *above mentioned*, and uses words, that *in them* we sometimes meet with, and, being bred an attorney, he caught the language of *the said* trade, *whereof* he retains so much, that he is now rendered an incompetent critic *thereby*, and in consequence *thereof*.

We must now consider Sir John in the office of *Editor*. We shall pass by the absurdity of placing first, that which was written last. The lives of the poets ought to have closed the volumes. It is more material to observe, that it is the duty of an editor to know, with precision, the works of his author. In this the Knight has failed egregiously. We shall give a few instances. In the 11th vol. we are presented with, *The apotheosis of Milton*. He who reads the piece, will see, in the diction and sentiment, not one

feature of Johnson ; the truth is, it was written by *Guthrie*, and was seen in manuscript by an excellent person now living, and perhaps by others of that writer's acquaintance. The verses to Mrs. Montague are well known to be the production of Mr. *Jerningham*. In the 9th volume we have the Preface to Shakespeare, but without the concluding sentence. The author's words were these : " Of what has been performed in this revisal, an account is given in the following pages by Mr. *Steevens*, who might have spoken both of his own diligence and sagacity in terms of greater self-approbation, without deviating from modesty or truth." Why is this paragraph omitted by the editor ? Since Mr. *Steevens* deserved this praise at the hands of *Dr. Johnson*, neither the spleen nor the covered malice of the editor should with-hold it from him. Sir John pretends that he printed from the edition of 1765. Why did he so ? It was his duty to give every thing in the form it received from the finishing hand of the writer. Unluckily for the Knight, it appears to a demonstration that the minute corrections and alterations, which appear in Johnson's last edition, and were not in that of 1765, are all reprinted in the volume before us. The last edition was, therefore, followed by Sir John : were he to be tried at *Hickes's Hall*, he would be found guilty of *clipping*. If he is sore from wounds given to him by Mr. *Steevens*, Johnson ought not to be mutilated, to gratify the resentment of the editor.

There remains another blunder worthy of notice. In Johnson's Works, vol. 10th, we have a review of a *philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*. This was not written by Johnson. Whoever peruses it will clearly see that it neither has Johnson's style, nor manner of thinking. It was written by Mr. *Murphy*, and given, with many other pieces, to the literary magazine, at the time when Johnson was the conductor of that publication, and, through ill-health, not always able to compass what was expected of him. We have authority to add, that when Mr. *Murphy* was lately employed in making a collection of his own works,[1] the *review of the*

[1] For an account of which, see Review, vol. lxxv, p. 371,

sublime and beautiful was rejected by him on mature consideration. He did Mr. *Burke* the justice to read over again that gentleman's elegant tract, and found it to be a work of so much profound thinking, that it ought not to be opposed by the superficial remarks of one, who read with much hurry, and criticised with more. This being the state of the case, what the author of the piece thought erroneous, ought not, in justice to so fine a writer as Mr. Burke, to have the sanction of Dr. Johnson's name.

We have now, not without great drudgery, made our way through the Life of Dr. Johnson, and also through the confused mass of matter, with which it is encumbered. We have often cried out with Dr. Swift, "*What shall we say to a book, where the blunders and the malignity call for an answer in every page, and the dulness will not admit of one?*" Such is the work of Sir John Hawkins. Like the late Mr. Millar, we *have the grace* to *thank God* that *we have done with him*, and we hope for ever.

A list of all the pieces contained in Sir John Hawkins's edition of Dr. Johnson's works, with notes and references, etc., will be given in our next Review.

Aug. 1787 Vol. 77 p. 131

The life of this eminent writer, together with the miscellaneous compilation of Sir John Hawkins, has already occasioned a series of articles in our Reviews for April, May, and July last. We now come to Johnson's works. In this edition, we expected to find his translation of *Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia, from the French of Monsieur Le Grand*; and we therefore promised a review of a piece, upon which Dr. Johnson had laid out part of his time. The work, for reasons good or bad, is with-held by the Editor. We have, however, now before us, in the *Literary Magazine, or History of the Works of the Learned* for March 1735, an account of the book, by which it appears to have been published by *Bettesworth* and *Hitch*, of *Paternoster Row*. There can be no doubt but this is Johnson's translation. The substance of it is as follows: Father Jerome Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit, embarked, in 1622, in the same fleet with the Count *Vidigueira*, who was then, by the King of Portugal, appointed Viceroy of

the Indies. They arrived at *Goa*; and on January 26th, 1624, Father Lobo set out for *Abyssinia*. The mission, he knew, was extremely dangerous, two of the Fathers, appointed at the same time with himself, having been murdered in their attempt to get into that empire. *Lobo* had better success; after undergoing great toils, he got with safety into that country, so much talked of, and so little known. Then follows a description of *Abyssinia*: it formerly extended from the *Red Sea* to the kingdom of *Congo*, and from Egypt to the Indian Sea, containing at the time of *Lobo's* mission forty provinces. The inhabitants are *Moors*, *Pagans*, *Jews*, and *Christians*. The last was then the reigning and established religion. This diversity of people and religion is the reason that the kingdom, in different parts, is under different forms of government, and that their laws and customs are extremely various. Some of the people neither sow their lands nor improve them, living on milk and flesh, and encamping like the Arabs, without any settled habitation. In some places they practise no rites of worship, though they believe that there dwells in the regions above, a BEING who governs the world. This Deity they call *Oul*. The Christianity professed by the Abyssinians is so corrupted with superstitious errors, and so mingled with ceremonies borrowed from the Jews, that little beside the name of Christianity is to be found among them. They live in tents, or cottages made of straw and clay, very rarely building with stone. Ethiopia produces very near the same kind of provisions as Portugal, but, by the laziness of the inhabitants, in a much less quantity. What the ancients imagined of the torrid zone is so far from being true, that the climate is very temperate. The blacks have better features than in other countries. They have two harvests in the year, one in winter, which begins in May, and lasts, with great rigour, through the months of July, August, and September; and the other in spring. Lent is kept by the *Abyssins* with great strictness.

Among the animals of the country are, the lion, the elephant, the rhinoceros, the unicorn, horses, and cows. Every man who has a thousand cows saves once a-year

a day's milk, and makes a bath for his friends ; so that to give an idea of a man's wealth, their common expression is, *he bathes so many times a-year.* Their males marry about ten years old, and their females younger. Their marriage tie is so loose, that they part whenever they find that they cannot live agreeably together. Their money is an iron coin, and salt is a general barter for other commodities.

Of the river *Nile*, which has furnished so much controversy, we have a full and clear description, on the authority of Father Lobo, who speaks from his own knowledge. This mighty river is called by the natives *Abavi*, the *Father of Waters.* It rises in *Sacola*, a province of the Kingdom of *Goiama*, one of the most fruitful in all the Abyssinian dominions. On the declivity of a mountain, in the eastern part of this kingdom, the source of the *Nile* has been discovered. It springs from two holes, each about two feet diameter, and distant a stone's cast from each other. One of them is about five feet and a half in depth, *Lobo* not being able to sink his line farther : a line of ten feet did not reach the bottom of the other. These springs are supposed to be the vents of a great subterraneous lake. As to the course of the Nile, its waters, after their first rise, run to the eastward, about the length of a musket-shot ; then turning to the north, they continue hidden in the grass and weeds for about a quarter of a league, where they again discover themselves among some rocks. The Nile receives large increase from other rivers, and in the plain of *Boad*, which is not above three days journey from its source, it is so broad, that a musket-ball will scarce fly from one bank to another. Here it begins to run northward, deflecting a little towards the east, for the space of nine or ten leagues ; it then enters the so much talked of lake of *Dambia*, and flows with so violent a rapidity, that its waters may be distinguished through the whole passage, which is no less than six leagues. Here begins the greatness of the *Nile.* At a place called *Alata*, fifteen miles farther, it rushes precipitately from the top of a rock, and forms one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the world. *Lobo* says, he passed under it without being wet, and resting himself for the sake of the coolness, was

charmed with a thousand delightful rainbows, which the sunbeams painted on the water in all their shining and lively colours. After this cataract, the Nile collects its scattered stream among the rocks. A stone bridge of one arch was here built over the river by *Sultan Segued.* At this place the Nile alters its course, and visits various provinces. To pursue it through all its mazes, and accompany it round the kingdom of *Goiama*, is a journey of twenty-nine days. From *Abyssinia* it passes into the countries of *Faculo* and *Ombarca.* Of these vast regions, Lobo says, we have little knowledge. In the year 1615, *Rassela*[1] *Christos*, Lieutenant General to *Sultan Segued*, entered these regions with his army, but not being able to get intelligence, returned, without daring to attempt any thing.

As Abyssinia terminates at these deserts, *Lobo* adds, that " he followed the course of the *Nile* no farther. Here, says he, I leave it to range over barbarous kingdoms, and convey wealth and plenty into Egypt, which owes to the annual inundations of this river its envied fertility. I know not any thing of the rest of its passage, but that it receives great increase from many other rivers ; that it has several cataracts like that already described ; and that few fish are to be found in it ; which scarcity, doubtless, is to be attributed to the *river-horses* and *crocodiles*, that destroy the weaker inhabitants of these waters. Something, likewise, may be imputed to the *cataracts*, where fish cannot fall far without being killed."

As to the causes of the inundation of the *Nile*, *Lobo* says, " some theorists have been of opinion, that they are occasioned by high winds, which stop the current, and force the water above its banks. Others pretend a subterraneous communication between the ocean and the *Nile*, and that the sea, being violently agitated, swells the river. Many ascribe it to the melting of snow on the mountains of Ethiopia ; but I never saw snow in Abyssinia, except on mount *Semen* in the kingdom of *Tigre*, very remote from the Nile, and on *Namera*, which is indeed not

[1] From this officer, Johnson, it is probable, took the name of *Rasselas*, for his philosophical romance.

far distant; but there never falls snow enough to wet the foot of the mountain, when it is melted. To the immense labours of the *Portuguese*, mankind is indebted for the knowledge of the real cause of these inundations. Their observations inform us, that Abyssinia, where the *Nile* takes its rise, is full of mountains, and, in its natural situation, is much higher than *Egypt*; that all the winter, from *June* to *September*, no day is without rain; that the Nile receives, in its course, all the rivers, brooks, and torrents that fall from those mountains; these necessarily swell the *Nile* above its banks, and fill the plains of Egypt with inundations. This," says Lobo, "is all I have to inform the readers of concerning the *Nile*; which the *Egyptians* adored as the Deity, in whose choice it was to bless them with abundance, or deprive them of the necessaries of life."

With this curious account of the *Nile*, and its inundations, we imagine the Reader will not be displeased. We find it in the *Literary Magazine, or the Works of the Learned*, for March 1735. Father Lobo gives a copious account of the progress of the Catholic religion, to the time of the expulsion of the Jesuits, which happened on the death of *Sultan Segued*. *Le Grand*, the French translator, has added a curious sequel to *Lobo's* history, wherein we are informed of the many fruitless attempts which have been made to introduce again the *Jesuit* missionaries into the *Abyssinian* empire, in order to bring the Emperor and his subjects under obedience to the See of *Rome*. There are many other curious dissertations added by M. *Le Grand*. It is to be regretted, that Sir *John Hawkins* did not reduce the life of Johnson to one fourth of its present quantity, and fill the rest of his volume with a tract which teems with important matter.

Of the tragedy of Irene, which has been long in every body's hands, we intended to give a full and critical analysis; but this we find has been already done in the Gentleman's Magazine for February 1749. By this account it appears, that the tragedy was first acted at Drury-lane on Monday, February the 6th, 1749, and from that time represented without interruption to Monday,

February 20th, being in all thirteen nights; since that time it has not, as we believe, been exhibited on any stage. The cause of this failure may be imputed to the bad contrivance of the fable. The action is cold and languid. There is not, throughout the piece, a single situation to alarm the passions of terror or pity. *Irene* may be added to some other plays in our language, which have lost their place in the theatre, but continue to please in the closet. Johnson's diction is, at once, nervous, rich, and elegant. The versification is harmonious throughout; but splendid language, and melodious numbers, though they may form a fine poem, will not constitute a tragedy. The sentiments are beautiful, always happily expressed, and often with a full comprehensive brevity. As it is the drama of an eminent writer, we should wish to see it revived. For this purpose the opportunity is fair. No monument is erected in Westminster Abbey to a writer, whose genius and learning are held in the highest esteem. The managers of our theatres would do themselves honour, if they would order *Irene* to be prepared for representation, and appropriate the receipts of the night to the erecting of a monument to this great Author.

The Vanity of human Wishes, was published January 9, 1749, a few months before the commencement of our Review. Sir John Hawkins says, it was after *Irene*, and therefore he concludes, that the profits arising from that tragedy were inconsiderable. This inference is not warranted. The Gentleman's Magazine calls it "*a satire long wished for, being an imitation of Juvenal, by the author of London;*" and at the same time adds, "*We hope to be able soon to give our readers a specimen of a tragedy, intitled Irene, by the same ingenious author, Mr. Garrick having it now in rehearsal.*" The poem of London, we find from this account, was universally admired, since it whetted the public curiosity for another by the same hand. The *Vanity of human Wishes* was therefore published, and, as it should seem, sent forth as a precursor to dispose the minds of the public in favour of the tragedy of *Irene*, which followed in less than a month. The tenth satire of Juvenal has been always justly admired; and though

translated by *Dryden*, *Johnson's* imitation approaches nearest to the spirit of the original. The subject is taken from the second Alcibiades of Plato, with an intermixture of the sentiments of *Socrates* concerning the object of prayers offered up to the Deity. The general proposition is, that the favours prayed for by mankind are, when granted, ruinous and destructive. This is exemplified in a variety of instances, such as, riches, the honours of state pre-eminence, the powers of eloquence, military glory, long life, and the advantages of beauty. Juvenal's conclusion is admirable! Let us, he says, "leave it to the Gods to judge what is fittest for us: Man is dearer to his Creator than to himself. If we must pray for any special grace, let it be for a sound mind in a sound body. Let us pray for fortitude, that we may think the labours of Hercules, and all his sufferings, preferable to a life of luxury, dissipation, and the soft repose of Sardanapalus. This is a blessing within the reach of every man; this we can give ourselves. It is virtue, and virtue only, that can make us happy." Johnson has succeeded wonderfully in giving to his imitation the air of an original. The Christian had to struggle with the Heathen poet,and though we cannot say that he has surpassed him, he has, at least, entered into a noble competition. For the characters, which *Juvenal* has chosen, to illustrate his doctrine, Johnson substituted others from modern history: for *Sejanus*, he gives Cardinal *Wolsey*, the *Duke of Buckingham* stabbed by Felton, *Lord Strafford* and *Lord Clarendon:* for *Tully* and *Demosthenes*, *Lydiat*,[1] *Galileo*, and *Archbishop Laud:*

[1] LYDIAT was a very learned divine, and mathematician, fellow of New College, Oxon, and rector of Okerton, near Banbury. He wrote, among other things, a Latin treatise, *De natura cœli*, etc., in which he attacked the sentiments of *Scaliger* and *Aristotle*, not bearing to hear it urged, *that some good things are true in philosophy and false in divinity*. He made above six hundred sermons on the harmony of the evangelists. Being unsuccessful in publishing his works, he lay in the prison of *Bocardo* at *Oxford*, and in the *King's Bench*, till *Bishop Usher*, *Dr. Laud*, *Sir William Boswell*, and *Dr. Pink* released him, by paying his debts. He petitioned King Charles I. to be sent to Ethiopia, etc., to procure MSS. Having spoken in favour of monarchy and bishops, he was plundered by the parliamentary forces, and twice carried away prisoner from his rectory; and afterwards had not a second shirt in three months, unless he borrowed one. He died very poor, in 1646.

for *Hannibal*, *Charles* XIIth of *Sweden;* and to shew the consequences of long life, he says,

> "From Marlb'rough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
> And Swift expires a driv'ler and a show."

The whole of the English poem is in a style that rivals the vigour and the harmony of *Pope.*

We shall now proceed to give, as succinctly as we can, the works of *Johnson*, as they are arranged in the edition before us.

The second and third volumes, and one half of the fourth, contain the Lives of the Poets, in the same order as in the edition of 1781. These biographical pieces were originally published in 1779, as prefaces to the works of the English poets, which were printed in sixty volumes small 8vo. Our Readers will find a particular account of that work, in several detached articles, in the 61st, 65th, and 66th volumes of our Review.

Sir John has added several notes to these lives, consisting of stories about characters and persons, wholly foreign to the life of the poet.

The remaining half of the fourth volume contains the lives of several eminent men. 1st, *Father Paul Sarpi*, author of the History of the Council of Trent, from the Gentleman's Magazine for 1738, p. 581.—2d, *Boerhaave*, from ditto for 1739, p. 176.—3d, *Admiral Blake*, from ditto for 1740, p. 301.—4th, *Sir Francis Drake*, ib. p. 389.—5th, *Baratier*, ib. p. 612.—6th, *Morin*, for 1741, p. 375.—7th, *Burman*, for 1742, p. 206.—8th, *Sydenham*, prefixed to a translation of Sydenham's works by Dr. Swan, published in 1742.—9th, *Cheynel*, first published in the *Student*, 1751.—10th, *Cave*, "This life," as we are informed in a note, "first appeared in the Gentleman's Mag. for 1754, and is now printed from a copy revised by the author, at the request of Mr. Nicholls, in 1781"; we find it the same as in the Mag. for 1754, p. 55, with no other alteration than the addition of a note, containing the epitaph on Cave, and a short description of his monument.—11th, *The King of Prussia*, first printed in the Literary Magazine, 1756.—

12th, *Sir T. Browne*, prefixed to the second edition of Sir Thomas's *Christian morals*; see Monthly Review, vol. xiv. p. 448.—13th, *Ascham*, first printed with Ascham's works in 4to, of which we gave an account in our Review, vol. xxxviii. p. 147.

The 5th, 6th, and 7th volumes contain the Rambler, and the 8th the Idler. These works are so well known, that we need not here add a syllable in their praise.

The 9th volume contains the essays written by Johnson in the Adventurer; and a collection of tracts, chiefly philological. These are the *plan* of, and preface to, his English Dictionary.—*Proposals* for printing Shakespeare's works.—The *preface* to Shakespeare, and *notes* on his plays.—An *account of the Harleian Library;* this dissertation was noticed in our Rev. vol. 1, p. 147.—*An essay on the origin and importance of small tracts.—Some account of a book called the life of Benvenuto Cellini.*[1]—*A view of the controversy between M. Crousaz and Mr. Warburton, concerning Pope's Essay on Man;* first published in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1743, p. 152.—*Preliminary discourse to the London Chronicle.—Introduction to the World Displayed.* The World Displayed was a collection of voyages and travels, from writers of several nations, in four volumes, published by Newbery, "to oblige whom," says Sir John Hawkins, "it is conjectured that Johnson drew up this curious and learned paper." It contains, in a pleasing style, the history of navigation, and the discovery of America and the islands of the West Indies.—*The preface to the Preceptor.—The preface to Rolt's Dictionary;* see an account of this work in our Review, vol. xvi, p. 243.—*Preface to the translation of Father Lobo's voyage.—An essay on epitaphs.*

The 10th volume contains, the *False alarm;* see Rev. vol. xlii. p. 62.—*Thoughts on the transactions respecting Falkland's island;* see Rev. vol. xliv. p. 330.—*The Patriot;* see Rev. vol. li. p. 298.—*Taxation no tyranny;* see Rev. vol. lii. p. 253.—*Observations on the state of affairs* in 1756. —*Introduction to the political state of Great Britain.* Then

[1] Of this work we also gave an account, from Nugent's translation. See Rev., vol. xlv, p. 148.

follow, some reviews of books and original essays [1] from the Literary Magazine, and other periodical papers, in which Johnson was known to have been engaged; and the volume concludes with *The journey to the Western Islands* of Scotland; see Rev. vol. lii. p. 57.

The 11th, and last volume, contains, *Rasselas;* of which see our account in Rev. vol. xx. p. 428.—*The vision of Theodore;* first published in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1748, p. 159, and afterwards in the Preceptor.—*The apotheosis of Milton,* from the Gentleman's Magazine for 1738, p. 232, and seq. This was not Johnson's, as we have already said in our last month's Review, p. 69. Then follow some *prayers and devotional exercises.* These are succeeded by a collection of *apophthegms, sentiments, opinions, and occasional reflections.* From Mrs. Piozzi, and others, Sir John Hawkins has given the public a number of maxims, observations, and stories; but divested of time, place, and the occasion that produced them, for which reason they are, in a great degree, flat and insipid, many of them coarse, and some of them lessen the character they were meant to heighten.

The remainder of the volume consists of Johnson's poetical works: of these, the first is *Irene.* See p. 135.

The next is *London,* a poem, the merits of which we mentioned when we gave Johnson's life, in our Rev. for April last, p. 282. & seq. In this edition, we discover a most material typographical error.

> "Let such raise palaces, and manors buy,
> Collect a tax, or farm a lottery;
> With warbling eunuchs fill our *silenc'd* stage,
> And lull to servitude a thoughtless age."

The sense requires that it should be *licensed* stage.

The vanity of human wishes is the next in order.

These three larger poems are followed by prologues, odes, epitaphs, Latin poetical translations, imitations, impromptus, &c., chiefly collected from the Gentleman's Magazine for the years between 1747 and 1750, inclusive. By looking at the magazines, about that period, we

[1] These are not all Johnson's. See our last month's Rev., p. 70, etc.

observed many poems, which from analogy we think were Johnson's productions: we again repeat the observation, that it is an indispensable part of an editor's duty, especially in collecting small and fugitive pieces, to shew their authenticity. If Sir John thought several essays, reviews of books, odes, &c. which Dr. Johnson, in the earlier part of his life, furnished for periodical publications, worthy of a place in this edition of his works, why did he not select the debates in the senate of Lilliput? they are excellent, both in style and sentiment, and ought by all means to have been preserved. This omission, however, is not much to be lamented, as these debates have been collected into two volumes, published as a supplement to Johnson's works, by Mr. Stockdale.

Such is the collection given to the Public by Sir John Hawkins. Beside some insertions, which did not belong to Johnson, we imagine there are some omissions. The table of *Cebes*, in the Preceptor, we have been told, was the work of Johnson. The translation of P. Brumoy's essay on the Greek comedy, published in Mr. *Lenox's* Greek Theatre, was also his; and we recollect beside, Remarks upon the tragedy of *Macbeth*, published about 1746, as a specimen of an intended edition of Shakespeare. Why these pieces are not reprinted in this edition, we do not know. They ought at least to have been mentioned in a catalogue of Johnson's works. Of the Latin poetry, we have given no critical account, having run already into great length. That subject may be resumed upon some future occasion.

We have only to add, that in what we have said of Lobo's voyage to Abyssinia, we were obliged to trust to the abstract which we found in the history of the works of the learned. We have since been able to obtain the entire volume, published by *Bettesworth and Hitch*, 1735. The preface agrees with that reprinted in this edition. In the style there are evident marks of Johnson's manner. We see the infant *Hercules*: the translation has numberless inaccuracies, but if it be true that *Johnson*, in his diary, claims it as his own, we think, if no better evidence should throw new light on the matter, that it must be considered

as the first work of an eminent writer. How it came into the hands of *Bettesworth and Hitch* cannot, perhaps, now be known. It might be through the means of a Birmingham bookseller.

To conclude; the works before us will remain a lasting monument of the genius and the learning of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Had he written nothing else, there is here a quantity that marks a life spent in study and meditation. When to this we add the labours that attended his Dictionary, we may allow, as he was used to say of himself, that he *has written his share*. From the volumes now published, great improvement may be derived. With due precautions, men may learn to give to their style precision and energy; they may be taught to think with depth and perspicuity; and all by these books may advance in virtue.

Jan. 1792 Vol. 7 p. 1[1]

Nothing can afford a stronger proof of the high estimation in which the character and writings of Dr. Johnson are held by the public, than the great attention that has been paid to the various, we might say *numerous*, accounts of his life, of his opinions, of his writings, and of his social connexions, which have appeared, since the presence of this distinguished luminary of literature was withdrawn from us by the common destiny of mankind:—but the hand of death could only reach his mortal part, which alone was vulnerable: his fame will survive; and his works will continue to be regarded as his most splendid monument, when stone and brass, when temples and cathedrals, are mouldered away, and are returned, like their builders, to the earth, from which they sprang.

Among the numerous friends, the admirers, we are tempted to add, the *idolizers*, of Johnson, (for the admiration of *some*, however justly founded, has been carried to

[1] Art. I. *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D. Comprehending an Account of his Studies and numerous Works, in Chronological Order; a Series of his Epistolary Correspondence, and Conversations with many eminent Persons; and various original Pieces of his Composition, never before published. The whole exhibiting a View of Literature, and Literary Men, in Great Britain, for near Half a Century, during which he flourished. By James Boswell, Esq. 4to. 2 vols., pp. 1100 in all. 2*l*. 2*s*. Boards. Dilly. 1791.

lengths little short of idolatry,) Mr. Boswell is well known, as not the least considerable, in the esteem and confidence of that great and singular character,—the memorials of which he has, at length, presented to us: we say at *length*, because the *promised* work has been long expected.

With regard to the form in which Mr. B.'s work is given to the public, if not altogether new, it is somewhat extraordinary as to the *manner* in which the author has written it: but to us the novelty is not unpleasant. Xenophon's *Memorabilia* [1] of Socrates may, possibly, have first suggested to Mr. B. the idea of preserving and giving to us the *Memorabilia* of Johnson: but he professes to have followed a model of later times; that of Mason, in his Memoirs of Gray.[2] He has, however, by much, the advantage of

[1] The *Memorabilia* of Socrates, we apprehend, gave rise to all those later compilements known by the name *of Books in Ana*; to which class, Mr. Boswell's work may, undoubtedly, be referred. Wolfius gives the history of these publications, in his preface to the *Causaboniana*. He observes, that though this Latin termination of noun adjectives plural, of the neuter gender, furnishes a new sort of title, to collections of the wise or witty sayings of learned and ingenious men, yet the idea itself is of very remote antiquity; that the books of Xenophon, concerning the sayings and actions of Socrates, form a *Socratiana*; that the Apophthegms of the philosophers, those of Epictetus, the works of Athenæus, of Stobæus, and several others, are books in *Ana*. Wolfius farther observes, that the *Scaligerana* was the first of the *Ana*, being drawn from the papers of Vassant and Vertunian; it is added that they took the whole from the mouth of Scaliger; who, in some respects, may be considered as the JOHNSON of his day.—Afterward appeared *Perroniana, Thuana, Patiniana, Sorberiana, Naudæana, Menagiana, Anti-Menagiana, Fureteriana, Chevræana*, &c., down to *Arlequiniana*. Of all these, the *Menagiana* has been generally deemed the best: but now we have what we may entitle JOHNSONIANA. —The French have been great dealers in this kind of literature: but it seems probable that we may be up with them *in time*.

[2] Instead, (says he,) of melting down my materials into one mass, and constantly speaking in my own person, by which I might have appeared to have more merit in the execution of the work, I resolved to adopt and enlarge upon the excellent plan of Mr. Mason, in his Memoirs of Gray. Wherever narrative is necessary to explain, connect, and supply, I furnish it, to the best of my ability; but in the chronological series of Johnson's life, which I trace as distinctly as I can, year by year, I produce, wherever it is in my power, his own minutes, letters, or conversation, being convinced that this mode is more lively, and will make my readers better acquainted with him, than even most of those were who actually knew him, but could only know him partially; whereas there is here an accumulation of intelligence from various points, by which his character is more fully understood and illustrated.

Mr. Mason, in the quantity, variety, and richness, of his materials.

"Indeed," says the biographer, "I cannot conceive a more perfect mode of writing any man's life, than not only relating all the most important events of it in their order, but interweaving what he privately wrote, and said, and thought; by which mankind are enabled, as it were, to see him live, and to "live o'er each scene" with him, as he actually advanced through the several stages of his life. Had his other friends been as diligent and ardent as I was, he might have been almost entirely preserved. As it is, I will venture to say, that he will be seen, in this work, more completely than any man who has ever yet lived.[1]—And he will be seen as he really was; for I profess to write, not his panegyric, which must be all praise, but his life; which, great and good as he was, must not be supposed to be entirely perfect."

Among the literati of the present age, and particularly those who were intimately conversant with Dr. Johnson, we know of none better qualified, from a personal acquaintance with the hero of the story, than is Mr. B. for a complete execution of the task which he had imposed on himself, in writing the life of this extraordinary man. He had known, he had familiarly, and almost daily conversed with Dr. Johnson for upward of twenty of the last years of his life: during which Mr. B. was happy in the kind regard and unreserved confidence of his venerable friend; who, it unquestionably appears, was fully apprized of his biographical intention, and manifested no disapprobation of it.

As a man of letters, Mr. B. was certainly competent to this arduous undertaking. It was farther requisite that the biographer should not only be a scholar, but that he should also have had the advantage of being conversant with the world, as well as with books. It was likewise necessary that he should be endued with that patient and persevering attention, and assiduous regard to the full accomplishment of his design, without which that design must have proved abortive;—and these requisites seem to have been happily united in the present instance.

[1] We are very much inclined to subscribe to the truth of this remark.

With respect to the peculiar mode and fashion in which this work has been cast, something may be said for it, and something against it. An objector may say, that in the formal garb, and with all the minutiæ of conversation, the progress of the reader, through a performance of such considerable extent, can never be rapid; and that, as tastes vary, many particulars will appear,—to one person, frivolous,—to another, dull; and to a third, uninteresting, or uninstructive. On the other hand, an approver will contend, that where the biographer has for his subject the life and sentiments of so eminent an instructor of mankind as SAMUEL JOHNSON, and so immense a storehouse of mental treasure to open and disclose to the eager curiosity of rational and laudable inquiry, there can be no just exception taken against the number and variety of the objects exhibited. He will ask, "What conversation could have passed, where so great a genius presided, at which every man of learning and taste would not wish to have been present, or, at least, to have it faithfully reported to him?"—To the reporter, would he not say, "Give us *all*; suppress nothing; lest, in rejecting that which, in your estimation, may seem to be of inferior value, you unwarily throw away gold with the dross."[1]

In like manner we have frequently reflected, while perusing the ample volumes now before us, what an invaluable

[1] Let Mr. B. speak for himself, as he judiciously does, on this head.—"I am (says he) fully aware of the objections which may be made to the *minuteness*, on some occasions, of my detail of Johnson's conversations, and how happily it is adapted for the petty exercise of ridicule, by men of superficial understanding, and ludicrous fancy; but I remain firm and confident in my opinion, that minute particulars are frequently characteristic, and always amusing, when they relate to a distinguished man. I am, therefore, exceedingly unwilling that *almost*[2] any thing which my illustrious friend thought it worth his while to express, with any degree of point, should perish.—Of one thing I am certain, that considering how highly the small portion which we have of the table-talk and other anecdotes of our celebrated writers is valued, and how earnestly it is regretted that we have not more, I am justified in preserving rather too many of Johnson's sayings than too few; especially, as from the diversity of dispositions it cannot be known, with certainty, before hand, whether what may seem trifling to some, and perhaps to the collector himself, may not be most agreeable to many; and the greater number that an author can please, in any degree, the more pleasure does there arise to a benevolent mind."

[2] Might not that Scotticism have been easily avoided?

treasure we should deem it, did we possess such copious and circumstantial accounts of many great men, of former times, of whom we know just enough to make us lament that we know no more! What consideration would we not gladly afford for such accounts of the lives and opinions of an ARISTOTLE, a PLATO, a SENECA, a BACON, a NEWTON, or a LOCKE,—with many—many others, of the illustrious dead, that might be named!—but let us not detain the impatient reader from the contents of the present work.

Suffer us, however, in this place, to add, for ourselves, that we are among the number of those readers of Mr. Boswell's voluminous journal, (for such it may be styled,) who do not think that he has set before us too plenteous an entertainment: nor have we found, that, often as we have sat down to his mental feast, we have ever risen from it with a cloyed appetite.

In reviewing a work of this uncommon kind, extracts will be expected; and this expectation might be amply gratified, if we wished to fill our Review with JOHNSONIANA: but, for this, we could neither conveniently make sufficient room, nor easily reconcile it to our consciences, to be too rapacious in plundering an author.—Our greatest difficulty, where the garden is so abundant, and where the produce is so tempting, will be the CHOICE.

Before we proceed to our selection, let us attend to Mr. B.'s general introductory paragraph, relative to his opportunities of becoming acquainted with the more remarkable incidents of Johnson's early years, as well as with those of the subsequent part of his life:

"As I had the honour and happiness of enjoying his friendship for upwards of twenty years; as I had the scheme of writing his life constantly in view; as he was well apprized of this circumstance, and from time to time obligingly satisfied my inquiries, by communicating to me the incidents of his early years; as I acquired a facility in recollecting, and was very assiduous in recording his conversation, of which the extraordinary vigour and vivacity constituted one of the first features of his character; and as I have spared no pains in obtaining materials

concerning him, from every quarter where I could discover that they were to be found, and have been favoured with the most liberal communications by his friends; I flatter myself that few biographers have entered upon such a work as this, with more advantages, independent of literary abilities, in which I am not vain enough to compare myself with some great names who have gone before me in this kind of writing."

Such opportunities for obtaining biographical materials, relative to an individual, perhaps never before fell to the lot of any writer; and greater and more unremitted application in the use of them cannot, we believe, easily be conceived. We have, indeed, been astonished at Mr. B.'s industry and perseverance!—to say nothing of the multiplicity and variety of his own occasional and pertinent observations, which are properly interspersed with the anecdotes, letters, and details.

In giving specimens of Mr. B.'s manner of executing this his *voluntary* and *pleasing* talk, we shall not attempt to follow any regular order of selection: but we shall rather extract, as it were fortuitously, from various and unconnected parts of the memoirs, some of the particular anecdotes, or other passages, which more peculiarly attracted our notice, in perusing the volumes.

A warm attachment to religion, (not to *church-going*,) was a prominent feature in Dr. Johnson's character; and much has been said concerning his *partiality* for the "*old religion*;"[1] some not scrupling to declare, that they really considered him as (in his heart) of that persuasion. The following *conversation-piece* will not greatly tend to banish that idea from the minds of those who may have entertained this opinion. The dialogue is recorded as having passed in the year 1769.

"I had hired," (says Mr. Boswell,) "a Bohemian as my servant while I remained in London, and being much pleased with him, I asked Dr. Johnson whether his being a Roman catholic should prevent my taking him with me to Scotland:

[1] Our author remarks, that "the mild MELANCTHON so styled that of the Roman catholic church."

"JOHNSON. 'Why no, Sir, if *he* has no objection, you can have none.'

"BOSWELL. 'So, Sir, you are no great enemy to the Roman catholic religion.'

"JOHNSON. 'No more, Sir, than to the presbyterian religion.'

"Bos. 'You are joking.'

"JOHNSON. 'No, Sir, I really think so. Nay, Sir, of the two, I prefer the popish.'

"Bos. 'How so, Sir?'

"JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, the presbyterians have no church, no apostolical ordination.'

"Bos. 'And do you think that absolutely essential, Sir?'

"JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, as it was an apostolical institution, I think it is dangerous to be without it. And, Sir, the presbyterians have no public worship; they have no form of prayer in which they know they are to join. They go to hear a man pray, and are to judge whether they will join with him.'

"Bos. 'But, Sir, their doctrine is the same with that of the church of England, their confession of faith, and the 39 articles, contain the same points; even the doctrine of predestination.'

"JOHNSON. 'Why yes, Sir, predestination was a part of the clamour of the times, so it is mentioned in our articles, but with as little positiveness as could be.'

"Bos. 'Is it necessary, Sir, to believe all the 39 articles?'

"JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, that is a question which has been much agitated. Some have thought it necessary that they should all be believed; others have considered them to be only articles of peace; that is to say, you are not to preach against them.'

"Bos. 'It appears to me, Sir, that predestination, or what is equivalent to it, cannot be avoided, if we hold an universal presence in the Deity.'

"JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, does not God every day see things going on without preventing them?'

"Bos. 'True, Sir; but if a thing be certainly foreseen,

it must be fixed, and cannot happen otherwise; and if we apply this consideration to the human mind, there is no free will, nor do I see how prayer can be of any avail.'

"He mentioned," adds the author, very sensibly, "Dr. Clarke, and Bishop Bramhall, on liberty and necessity, and bid me read South's sermons on prayer; but avoided the question which has excruciated philosophers and divines, beyond any other. I did not press it farther, when I perceived that he was displeased, and shrunk from any abridgment of an attribute usually ascribed to the Divinity, however irreconcileable in its full extent, with the grand system of moral government. His supposed orthodoxy here cramped the vigorous powers of his understanding. He was confined by a chain which early imagination, and long habit, made him think massy and strong, but which, had he ventured to try, he could at once have snap'd asunder.—I proceeded:

"Bos. 'What do you think, Sir, of purgatory, as believed by the Roman catholics?'

"Johnson. 'Why, Sir, it is a very harmless doctrine. They are of opinion that the generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to merit being admitted into the society of blessed spirits; and therefore that God is graciously pleased to allow of a middle state, where they may be purified by certain degrees of suffering. You see, Sir, there is nothing unreasonable in this.'

"Bos. 'But then, Sir, their masses for the dead?'

"Johnson. 'Why, Sir, if it be once establish'd that there are souls in purgatory, it is as proper to pray for *them*, as for our brethren of mankind who are yet in this life.'[1]

"Bos. 'The idolatry of the mass?'

"Johnson. 'Sir, there is no idolatry in the mass. They believe God to be there, and they adore him.'

"Bos. 'The worship of saints?'

[1] Some readers will probably connect this remark of Dr. Johnson, with the circumstance of his offering up prayers for his deceased wife; and hence the notion of his strong inclination toward popery may receive some degree of confirmation.—Rev.

"JOHNSON. 'Sir, they do not worship saints; they invoke them; they only ask their prayers. I am talking all this time of the *doctrines* of the church of Rome. I grant you that in *practice*, purgatory is made a lucrative imposition, and that the people do become idolatrous as they recommend themselves to the tutelary protection of particular saints. I think their giving the sacrament only in one kind is criminal, because it is contrary to the express institution of CHRIST; and I wonder how the Council of Trent admitted it.'

"BOS. 'Confession?'

"JOHNSON. 'Why, I don't know but that is a good thing. The scripture says, "Confess your faults one to another;" and the priests confess, as well as the laity. Then it must be considered, that their absolution is only on repentance, and often on penance also. You think your sins may be forgiven without penance, on repentance alone.'

"I thus ventured to mention all the common objections against the Roman catholic church, that I might hear so great a man upon them. What he said is here accurately recorded. But it is not improbable that if one had taken the other side, he might have reasoned differently." Vol. i. p. 327–8.

Mr. B.'s remark, that his revered friend *might* have reasoned differently, had occasion been given for him to have defended the other side, seems to flow from an intimate and certain knowledge of the Doctor's character: it has been often asserted, that, in arguments and disputes, the object for which Johnson most strenuously contended, was not, always, so much the CAUSE, as the victory.

The conversations, in the author's *very frequent* visits to the Sage of Bolt-court, were not always of so grave a cast. They were often lighter, and consequently more pleasant, both in mode and effect: but in all, we see something of the original turn and manner of Johnson. Thus, for instance, vol. i. p. 480.

"Mr. Scott of Amwell's Elegies were lying in the room. Dr. Johnson observed, 'they are very well; but such as

twenty people might write.' On this I took occasion to controvert Horace's maxim,

> '. . . Mediocribus esse poetis
> Non Di, non homines, non concessere columnæ.'

for here (I observed) was a very middle-rate poet, who pleased many readers, and therefore poetry of a middle sort was entitled to some esteem; nor could I see why poetry should not, like every thing else, have different gradations of excellence, and consequently of value. Johnson repeated the common remark, that 'as there is no necessity for our having poetry at all, it being a luxury, an instrument of pleasure, it can have no value, unless when exquisite in its kind.' I declared myself not satisfied. 'Why then, Sir, (said he,) Horace and you must settle it.' He was not much in the humour of talking." This conversation passed in 1775.

The biographer was certainly right in declaring himself "not satisfied:"—but, as Horace and Johnson are authorities of too great magnitude to be formally disputed in this place, we shall here take leave of the subject, and, (for the present,) of Mr. Boswell's performance, with briefly remarking, that, in most things, there is a *mediocrity* which (with submission to Dr. Johnson,) is of *some* value. In poetry, particularly, we may instance the works of many of our English Bards, which, though not EXQUISITE, are deservedly held in general esteem, and have gone through many editions:—as, Aaron Hill, Creech, Fenton, Oldham, Ambrose Phillips, Pomfret, Parnell, Roscommon, Sheffield, Watts, &c. &c. To these we may add Mr. Scott of Amwell [1]; whose poetry we have frequently mentioned with respect, and sometimes even with applause; yet we acknowledge it possible that the moral, benevolent, and virtuous tendency of his compositions, together with the private worth of the amiable writer, may (perhaps imper-

[1] John Scott, Esq., of Amwell, in Herts, was a quaker by profession. He was a man of an independent fortune; and being in the commission of the peace, approved himself so useful a magistrate, that his loss has been much lamented in that county. His compositions, both in prose and verse, have all been noticed in our Review: see our GENERAL INDEX.

ceptibly,) have had some influence on our judgment, with respect to the merit of the *poetry* :—for there is a charm in goodness of HEART, which may, sometimes, be able to soften, in a degree that humanity will always allow, the rigour of critical Justice,[1] while weighing in her balance the mere errors of the HEAD : though, it is admitted, that such CLEMENCY should never prevail to the detriment of TRUTH, to the injury of SCIENCE, nor to the corruption of TASTE.

Feb. 1792 Vol. 7 p. 189

In our last month's Review, we offered to the acceptance of the public, a sketch of the peculiar character of this uncommon production, in order to shew its importance in the general scale of literature ; and we extracted one or two passages, as specimens of the manner and spirit in which the incidental *conversations* between Dr. Johnson and his friends were usually conducted. These conversations form, perhaps, the most valuable part of Mr. Boswell's publication ; yet it must be confessed that the numerous body of *anecdotes*, literary and biographical, have also a fair claim to the reader's prime regard as a most interesting part of the work. There is, also, another principal branch of the compilement, of the merit and value of which, due acknowledgment should be made, *viz.* the *Epistolary Correspondence*, which our author has occasionally interspersed, and naturally introduced, in the course of the narrative part of this ample performance. From the *Letters*, we have selected, with a few others, the celebrated one addressed to the late Earl of Chesterfield ; of which (to speak of it in Mr. Boswell's own terms,) " so much has been said, and about which curiosity has been so long excited, without being gratified." " I, for many years," says Mr. B. " solicited Johnson to favour me with a copy of it, that so excellent a composition might not be lost to posterity ;—at last, he found, among his papers, a copy of it, in his own hand-writing. This he gave to Mr. Langton ; adding, that if it were to come into print,

[1] " In weighing the merit of an unsuccessful, though well-designed, effort, ever let the *turn of the scale* be in favour of GOOD INTENTION."—VOLTAIRE'S *Advice to a Journalist.*

he wished it to be from that copy.[1] By Mr. Langton's kindness, I am enabled to enrich my work with a perfect transcript of what the world has so eagerly desired to see." Before we transcribe the latter itself, we must preface it, as Mr. B. has done, by a concise account of the occasion and motives on which it was written:

"Lord Chesterfield, to whom Johnson had paid the high compliment of addressing to his Lordship the (admirable) PLAN of his Dictionary, had behaved to him in such a manner as to excite his contempt and indignation. The world has been for many years amused with a story, confidently told, and as confidently repeated, with additional circumstances, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson, on occasion of his having been one day kept in waiting in his Lordship's anti-chamber (*sic*), for which the reason assigned was, that he had company with him; and that, at last, when the door opened, out walked Colley Cibber; and that Johnson was so violently provoked, when he found for whom he had been so long excluded, that he went away in a passion, and never would return.—Johnson himself, however, told me, that there never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him; but that his Lordship's *continued neglect* was the reason why he resolved to have no connexion with him.—When the Dictionary was on the eve of publication, Ld. C. who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that Johnson would dedicate the work to him, attempted, in a courtly manner, to soothe, and insinuate himself with the sage, conscious, as it should seem, of the cold indifference with which he had treated its learned author; and farther attempted to conciliate him by writing two papers in "The World,"[2] in recommendation of the work; and it must be confessed, that they contain some studied compliments, so finely turned, that if there had been no previous offence, it is probable that Johnson would have been highly delighted. Praise, in general, was pleasing to him; but by praise from a man

[1] He had, before, dictated it to Mr. Boswell, from memory.

[2] A periodical paper, then in high fashion; to which Lord C. is said to have been a frequent contributor: the *stated* writer was Mr. Edward Moore.

of rank and elegant accomplishments, he was peculiarly gratified.—This courtly device failed of its effect. Johnson, who thought that " all was false and hollow," despised the honeyed words, and was even indignant that Lord C. should, for a moment, imagine, that he could be the dupe of such an artifice. His expression to me, concerning Lord C. on this occasion was, " Sir, after making great professions, he had, for many years, taken no notice of me ; but when my Dictionary was coming out, he fell a scribbling in The World about it. On which I wrote him a letter, expressed in civil terms, but such as might shew him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him."

We shall now lay before our readers a transcript of this justly-admired letter :

" My Lord,

" I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of The World, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

" When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address ; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le Vainqueur du Vainqueur de la terre* ;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending ; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could ; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

" Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door ; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without

one act of assistance,[1] one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

"The Shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with LOVE, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached the ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it;[2] till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

"My Lord,

"Your Lordship's most humble

"Most obedient servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

A friend of ours, on reading the note affixed to the foregoing letter, relative to the ten pounds, expressed his concern that Johnson did not return that money, or transfer it to some public charity; at the same time acquainting Ld. C. with the circumstance. We have some doubt how far this mark of resentment would have been right. Cer-

[1] The following note is subjoined by Mr. Langton: "Dr. Johnson, when he gave me this copy of his letter, desired that I would annex to it his information to me, that whereas it is said in the letter, that *no assistance had been received*, he did once receive from Lord Chesterfield the sum of ten pounds; but as that was so inconsiderable a sum, he thought the mention of it could not properly find a place in a letter of the kind that this was."

[2] Here Dr. Johnson (as Mr B. supposes) alludes to the loss of his wife.

tain it is, however, that Johnson remained under an obligation to his Lordship, to the value of *ten pounds.*

Without observing any formality of order, or method, in ranging through Mr. B.'s very amusing and multifarious exhibition, we shall make some stop at whatever object may happen, for the moment, to arrest our wandering attention. Thus,

The following is Mr. B.'s account of a design that was, at one time, formed, when Johnson shone in the plenitude of his political glory, (about the years 1770 and 1771) from the celebrity of his ministerial pamphlets, to bring this colossus of literature into parliament; though, perhaps, he would have shrunk, in the House of Commons, to even less than the usual size of men; as sometimes has been the case, when persons, eminent for literary abilities, have been transplanted thither, from the grove of Academus. Mr. B. observes, that

"It has been much agitated among Dr. Johnson's friends, and others, whether he would have been a powerful speaker in parliament, had he been brought in when advanced in life. I am inclined to think, that his extensive knowledge, his quickness and force of mind, his vivacity and richness of expression, his wit and humour, and, above all, his poignancy of sarcasm, would have had great effect in a popular assembly; and that the magnitude of his figure, and the striking peculiarity of his manner, would have aided the effect."

Such is the idea started by our biographer: but, on the other hand, he has candidly stated the opinion of a very good judge on this subject; and which will add some weight to the observation that we have hazarded, as above: it was observed by the late very ingenious Mr. Henry Flood, who was himself an eminent orator, that "Johnson having been long used to sententious brevity, and the short flights of conversation, might have failed in that continued and expanded kind of argument, which is requisite in stating complicated matters in public speaking." As a proof of this, he mentioned the supposed speeches in parliament, written by Johnson for the Gentleman's Magazine, none of which, in Mr. Flood's opinion, were at all like real debates.

This opinion seems to have received some confirmation from Sir William Scott, who, as Mr. B. remarks, said, that Johnson had told him, "that he had several times tried to speak in the Society of Arts, &c. but *found he could not get on.*" Mr. W. Gerard Hamilton also told our author, that Johnson, when observing to him, that it was prudent for a man who had not been accustomed to speak in public, to begin his speech in as simple a manner as possible, acknowledged that he rose in that Society to deliver a speech which he had prepared: "but, said he, all my flowers of oratory forsook me."

The late Mr. Strahan,[1] however, who was remarkable for his knowledge of mankind, and for his nice discrimination of human characters, and who was, in particular, well acquainted with the powers of Johnson, was so strongly impressed with the idea of his ability to make a great figure in the House of Commons, that he addressed the following letter on the subject, to one of the secretaries of the Treasury, with a view, no doubt, of rendering a signal service to government, and to his learned friend, had the letter produced the effect at which the worthy and very sensible writer aimed:

"Sir,

"You will easily recollect, when I had the honour of waiting on you, some time ago, I took the liberty of observing to you, that Dr. Johnson would make an excellent figure in the House of Commons, and heartily wished he had a seat there. My reasons are briefly these:

"I know his perfect good affection to his Majesty, and his government, which I am certain he wishes to support by every means in his power.

"He possesses a great share of manly, nervous, and ready eloquence; is quick in discerning the strength and weakness of argument; can express himself with clearness and precision; and fears the face of no man alive.

"His known character, as a man of extraordinary sense, and unimpeached virtue, would secure him the attention

[1] His Majesty's printer.

of the House, and could not fail to give him a proper weight there.

"He is capable of the greatest application, and can undergo any degree of labour, where he sees it necessary and where his heart and affections are strongly engaged. His Majesty's ministers might therefore securely depend on his doing, on every proper occasion, the utmost that could be expected from him. They would find him ready to vindicate such measures as tended to promote the stability of government, and resolute and steady in carrying them into execution. Nor is anything to be apprehended from the supposed impetuosity of his temper. To the friends of the King you will find him a lamb; to his enemies, a lion.

"For these reasons, I humbly apprehend that he would be a very able and useful member. And I will venture to say, the employment would not be disagreeable to him; and knowing, as I do, his strong affection to the King, his ability to serve him in that capacity, and the extreme ardour with which I am convinced he would engage in that service, I must repeat, that I wish most heartily to see him in the House.

"If you think this worthy of attention, you will be pleased to take a convenient opportunity of mentioning it to Lord North. If his Lordship should happily approve of it, I shall have the satisfaction of having been, in some degree, the humble instrument of doing my country, in my opinion, a very essential service. I know your good nature, and your zeal for the public welfare, will plead my excuse for giving you this trouble.

"I am, with the greatest respect, Sir,

"Your most obedient and humble servant,

"William Strahan."

"This recommendation, (says Mr. B.) we know was not effectual: but for what reason, can only be conjectured. It is not to be believed that Mr. Strahan would have applied, unless Johnson had approved it. I never heard him mention the subject; but, at a late period of his life, when Sir Joshua Reynolds told him that Mr. Edmund

Burke had said, that if he (Johnson) had come early into parliament, he certainly would have been the greatest speaker that ever was there, Johnson exclaimed " I should like to try my hand now."

Our author observes, that he cannot help wishing, (and some of our readers may, perhaps, join in the wish,) that Dr. Johnson *had* " tried his hand " in parliament; and we rather wonder, with Mr. B., that ministry did not make the experiment on this occasion, as they have done in similar instances, and with various success.

It may be imagined that there might be some difficulty in an attempt to reconcile Mr. Strahan's notion of his friend's warm affection for his Majesty's person and government, with the prevailing opinion respecting his Tory tenets, and his supposed attachments to the house of Stuart; but Johnson was, perhaps, better known to Mr. S. than to the world in general; and our present biographer relates an instance of the Doctor's profound and liberal manner of thinking, on a very nice constitutional point, which may, in some measure, render people cautious of pronouncing, decisively, on the political creed of the hero of these sheets. The instance is as follows:

In one of the conversations, at the conclave in Bolt Court, Goldsmith disputed very warmly with Johnson (the wren attacking the eagle!) against the well known maxim of the British constitution, " the King can do no wrong "; affirming, that " what was morally false could not be politically true; and as the King might, in the exercise of his regal power, command and cause the doing of what was wrong, it certainly might be said, in sense and in reason, that he *could* do wrong."

" Johnson. Sir, you are to consider, that in our constitution, according to its true principles, the King is the head; he is supreme; he is above every thing; and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore it is, Sir, that we hold, the King can do no wrong, that whatever may happen to be wrong in government may not be above our reach, by being ascribed to Majesty. Redress is always to be had against oppression, by punishing the immediate agents. The King, though he should command, cannot

force a judge to condemn a man unjustly; therefore it is the judge whom we prosecute and punish. Political institutions are formed on the consideration of what will most frequently tend to the good of the whole, although, now and then, exceptions may occur. Thus it is better, in general, that a nation should have a supreme legislative power, although it may at times be abused. And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that *if the abuse be enormous, nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.*"

"I mark," says Mr. B. "this last animated sentence with peculiar pleasure, as a noble instance of that truly dignified spirit of freedom which ever glowed in his heart, though he was charged with slavish tenets by superficial observers, because he was at all times indignant against that false patriotism, that pretended love of freedom, that unruly restlessness, which is inconsistent with the stable authority of any good government.—This generous sentiment, which he uttered with great fervour, struck me exceedingly, and stirred my blood to that pitch of fancied resistance, the possibility of which I am glad to keep in mind, but to which I trust I shall never be forced."

Bravely said, Mr. B.!—and, now, who are they who pronounced our biographer a flaming Tory? Sir, you are as good a Whig as most, and, it may be, a better than many of them:—as such, Brother PATRIOT! your Reviewer greets you well!

As it is said that a new edition of this entertaining and instructive work is in contemplation, we would hint to Mr. Boswell, (if not already discovered,) a remarkable *repetition* of a paragraph, which occurs in both of the volumes.—In vol. i. p. 230, we read as follows:

"I cannot allow any fragment whatever, that floats in my memory, concerning the great subject of this work, to be lost. Though a small particular may appear trifling to some, it will be relished by others, while every little spark adds something to the general blaze. And to please the true, candid, warm admirers of Johnson, and in any degree increase the splendour of his reputation, I bid defiance to the shafts of ridicule, or even of malignity:

thousands of them have been discharged at my ' Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides ' ; yet it still sails unhurt ' along the stream of time,' and, as an attendant upon Johnson, ' pursues the triumph, and partakes the gale.' "

In the second volume of this work, p. 167, the same paragraph makes a second appearance, *verbatim* : but hence, we suppose, it will be dislodged in the next edition.

Among the anecdotes, we observe a reflection on the poetical character of a late worthy acquaintance, the ingenious Dr. James Grainger, the translator of TIBULLUS, and author of the SUGAR-CANE, a *West Indian Eclogue*, of which we gave an account in the 31st volume of our Review. This gentleman ranked very respectably among the number of Dr. Johnson's intimates, and was, undoubtedly, much esteemed by him. Johnson here says, " He was an agreeable man ; a man who would do any good that was in his power " ; adding, that he thought the translation of Tibullus " very well done : but that the Sugar-cane did not please him." Dr. Johnson might not, perhaps, have been much pleased with *any* poem on the culture and uses of a plant to which he was a stranger, as well as to the climates in which it flourishes : but we apprehend the *Georgical* merit of Dr. G.'s poem to be very great,—as great as the work is *singular* ; for we have nothing else of the kind. The story, therefore, of a defect in the manuscript, (with the ridicule which accompanies it,) which does *not* appear in the printed copy, should not have been perpetuated in these memoirs ; and we trust it will not be found in the next edition.—The circumstance is thus related :

" Having talk'd of Dr. Grainger's *Sugar-cane*, I mentioned to him (Johnson) Mr. Langton's having told me, that this poem, when read in manuscript at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, had made all the assembled wits burst into a laugh, when, after much blank-verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph thus :

' Now, Muse, let's sing of rats——'

" And what increased the ridicule was, that one of the company, who slily overlooked the reader, perceived that

the word had been, originally, *mice*, and had been altered to *rats*, as more dignified."

If the slips of an author's pen, in an *uncorrected manuscript* copy of his work, are thus to be brought to light, and exposed to ridicule, no literary fame can hope to escape uninjured !—As to the *rats* mentioned in Dr. G.'s poem, the depredations of those animals are of such essential consequence with respect to the subject, that their introduction into the work was indispensable; and, surely, they do not make a more ridiculous figure than the *rooks*, *crows*, *frogs*, and *pismires*, in the Georgics of Virgil; to which, we believe, no critic ever objected.—That paragraph here criticized, in the "*Sugar-cane*," begins thus, in the printed work:

> "Nor with less [1] waste the whisker'd vermin race,
> A countless clan, despoil the low-land cane."

If our author, however, has heedlessly (we are sure it was not done *malignantly*,) let fall a stroke on the fair fame of the amiable Grainger, whom we well knew, and much lov'd,—he has, candidly, made him handsome amends, by the following *note*:

"Such is this little, laughable incident, which has been often related. Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who was an intimate friend of Dr. Grainger, and has a particular regard for his memory, has communicated to me the following explanation: 'The passage in question was originally not liable to such a perversion; for the author having occasion, in that part of his work, to mention the havoc made by the rats and mice, had introduced the subject in a kind of mock-heroic, and a parody of Homer's battle of the frogs and mice, invoking the Muse of the old Grecian bard, in an elegant and well-turned manner. In that state I had seen it; but afterwards, unknown to me, and other friends, he had been persuaded, contrary to his own better judgment, to alter it, so as to produce the unlucky effect above mentioned.'"

The Bishop gives this character of Dr. Grainger: "He

[1] Alluding to the mischief done to the planter's property, by other animals, (before mentioned), in hilly situations.

was not only a man of genius and learning, but he had many excellent virtues; being one of the most generous, friendly, and benevolent men I ever knew."—So far is very just: but this worthy prelate does not seem to have sufficiently borne in mind, that after all that has been said of this *supposed* questionable line, questionable even as to its very *existence*, no such line can be found in the poem: —of which we shall say no more, than that, in our opinion, the work abounds with a great variety of most beautiful passages, and is rich in its materials,[1] beyond all that can enter into an European imagination, not aided, as was that of its ingenious author, by a personal acquaintance with that part of our globe, in which its highly-varied scenery lies.

Now, after this little regale of sugar and lemon, (which we do not think is an unpleasant mixture,) let us, BROTHER PATRIOT, shake hands, and remain friends till our next monthly meeting; when we hope again to partake of the "feast of reason, and the flow of soul," which you have so plenteously provided for us.

May 1792 Vol. 8 p. 71

Horace justly compares a poem to a picture. We, in like manner, may consider the biographer as a painter; and such is Mr. Boswell; who has, in our opinion, drawn the best *whole length* of JOHNSON, that has yet been offered to the public view: though we must acknowledge, that in regard to some parts of it, in one or two of the features, at least, it seems rather a flattering resemblance. Not unfrequently does the hand of friendship appear to direct the pencil; yet, still it is JOHNSON that we behold: and never can it be said of this portrait, as often has been remarked of others, even when painted by the best artists, that "it is something like the Doctor, but *very like* Mr.—," somebody else.

Perhaps it will be observed, that it is improper to style this work a *resemblance* of Johnson, for that it is THE MAN himself; that here we have the sage, the philosopher, the moralist, the warm friend, the improving companion,

[1] We speak of the poem as *a whole*, including the *notes*, which do credit to the writer, as a naturalist.

in all his humours, whether grave or mellow; whether pensive in his study, oppressed with "morbid melancholy" in his chamber, or enlivened at the social board;—whether musing in the rural scene, wherever friendship invited him,—debating in the Urban portico of Bolt-court,[1] or philosophizing in the academic walks of Fleet-street.[2] In these situations, we view him in his mind's undress; not studiously arrayed for public observation; not designed to catch the applause of the admiring world!—all is natural, spontaneous, and unreserved. In his conversation with his friends, his sentiments, and *their's too*, (for *all* are here preserved,) appear to flow unpremeditated; open and liberal discussion takes its course, unrestrained; and even prejudice and implicit attachments, seem, at times, to enjoy the blessings of freedom.

We have said, that, in this picture, (*we cannot yet quit the allusion*,) the partial hand of friendship seems to have frequently guided the pencil. It does so, occasionally, but not always: for there are instances in which impartiality asserts her rights, and maintains them; in which Mr. Boswell's devotion to the "god of his idolatry" gives way to his superior regard for truth[3]: in which the violence of Dr. Johnson's temper appears to have occasionally overcome his wisdom;—when judgment has given way to prepossession—and anger has usurped the place of decorum[4]: for, in the warmth of earnest debate, this

[1] A court in which Dr. Johnson lived, during the latter years of his life, and in which he breathed his last.

[2] The Doctor and his friend (our author) were wont to remark on the preference due to social London, when compared with the still life of country retirement. On these occasions, they never failed to pronounce our great emporium the most desirable place in the world; and Fleet-street, in which the Mitre Tavern and Bolt Court were situated, seems to have been deemed the pleasantest part of all.

[3] Mr B. frequently differed in his opinion from his learned and eloquent friend: but his dissent was always in terms of the most becoming modesty and in his recitals of these instances, he decently leaves to his candid readers the decision of the point in dispute.

[4] Perhaps Dr. Johnson was well aware, that this appearance of a want of moderation and candor in himself, when disputing (especially) on religious or political topics,—and his violence of tone and manners, might require some apology:—which, accordingly, he seems to have casually offered in a conversation on the subject of intemperance in disputation.

powerful pleader seldom used the "allurements of

In p. 49 of the second vol. Mr. Boswell has thus recited the Doctor's sentiments on this head:

"Mr. Murray (one of the Judges of the Court of Session in Scotland) praised the ancient philosophers, for the candour and good humour with which those of different sects disputed with each other.

"Johnson: 'Sir, They disputed with good humour, because they were not in earnest as to religion. Had the ancients been serious in their belief, we should not have had their gods exhibited in the manner we find them represented in the poets. . . . They disputed with good humour on their fanciful theories, because they were not interested in the truth of them. When a man has nothing to lose, he may be in good humour with his opponent. . . . Being angry with one who controverts an opinion which you value, is a necessary consequence of the uneasiness which you feel. Every man who attacks my belief, diminishes, in some degree, my confidence in it, and therefore make me uneasy. Those only who believed in revelation have been angry on having their faith called in question; because they only had something on which they could rest, as matter of fact.'

"Murray: 'It seems to me, that we are not angry with a man for controverting an opinion which we believe and value; we rather pity him.'

"Johnson: 'Why, Sir, to be sure, when you wish a man to have that belief which you think is of infinite advantage, you wish well to him; but your primary consideration is your own quiet. If a madman were to come into this room with a stick in his hand, no doubt we should pity the state of his mind, but our primary consideration would be to take care of ourselves. We should knock him down first, and pity him afterward. No, Sir; every man will dispute with great good humour, on a subject in which he is not interested. I will dispute very calmly on the probability of another man's son being hanged, but if a man zealously enforces the probability that my son will be hanged, I shall certainly not be in very good humour with him.'

"Boswell, *in illustration*: 'If a man endeavours to convince me that my wife, whom I love very much, and in whom I have great confidence, is a disagreeable woman, and is even unfaithful to me, I shall be very angry, for he is putting me in fear of being unhappy.'

"Murray: 'But, Sir, truth will always bear an examination.'

"Johnson: 'Yes, Sir, but it is painful to be forced to defend it. Consider, Sir, how should you like, though conscious of your innocence, to be tried by a jury for a capital crime, once a week.'"

This is perhaps as good an apology as can be offered for the want of candour and good temper in disputation, whatever be the subject: but is the apology compleat? Is it a sufficient defence of despotism in argument? If we admit it as such, what will become of Horace's *audi alteram partem*, and of a much higher authority, which saith, "Be ready, always, to give an answer to every man that asketh you a REASON of the hope that is in you, with MEEKNESS and FEAR?" 1 PET. ch. iii. v. 5.

It seems, natural, however, for men who are not firmly persuaded of the truth of a favourite system, (imbibed, perhaps, in infancy,) to be angry with those who question that system; they *feel uneasy*, at the approach of investigation; they dread the *consequences*, and would *knock down* the

gentle language, but wished to compel, rather than to persuade." [1]

These shades, however, only serve to render the picture more perfect, in point of resemblance to the original. The general fault of biographical painters is, that they overwhelm their performances with too much *light*,—from an over-fondness for the subject on which they are engaged. We now lay aside the pencil and the pallet.

In the present article, we propose to give a few more specimens of this very miscellaneous performance, in addition to those which we have already extracted; and to *conclude* with the general character of Dr. Johnson, as summed up by his present biographer.

Vol. II. P. 45. speaking of MARRIAGE, Mr. B. noticed a common remark, that a man may be, on the whole, richer by marrying a woman with a very small portion, because a woman of fortune will be proportionably expensive; whereas, that woman, who brings none, will be moderate in expences.

"JOHNSON—'Depend on it, Sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune being used to the handling of money, spends it judiciously; but a woman who gets the command of money for the first time, on her marriage, has such a gust in spending it, that she throws it away in great profusion.'—He praised the ladies of the present age, insisting that they were more faithful to their husbands, and more virtuous in every respect, than in former times, because their understandings were better cultivated."

Our female readers will not quarrel with the Doctor, on account of the foregoing opinion:—nor do we.

P. 50, Vol. II. On the topic of Universities, and their endowments, Mr. B. observed that it has often been ignorantly urged, that the universities of England are too rich; so that learning does not flourish in them as it would do,

examiner:—but, is this the right way to support *any good cause?* Truth, as the sensible Scottish magistrate has observed, as above, shuns no inquiry; it gives her no *pain*; on the contrary, she delights in it, as well knowing that her best interests are promoted by it.

[1] An expression of Dr. Johnson, when speaking of Warburton; see his LIFE OF POPE, vol. iv. of his Lives of the Poets.

if those who teach had smaller salaries, and depended on their assiduity for a great part of their income.

JOHNSON—" Sir, The very reverse of this is the truth; the English universities are not rich enough. Our fellowships are only sufficient to support a man during his studies to fit him for the world, and, accordingly, in general, they are held *no longer* than till an opportunity offers of getting away. Now and then, perhaps, there is a Fellow who grows old in his college; but this is against his will, unless he be very indolent indeed. A hundred a year is reckoned a good fellowship, and that is no more than is necessary to keep a man decently, as a scholar. We do not allow our Fellows to marry, because we consider academical institutions as preparatory to a settlement in the world. It is only by being employed as a tutor, that a Fellow can obtain any thing more than a livelihood. To be sure, a man who has enough without teaching, will probably not teach; for we would all be idle if we could. In the same manner, a man who is to get nothing by teaching will not exert himself. Gresham college was intended as a place of instruction for London; able Professors were to read lectures *gratis*; they contrived to have no scholars; whereas, if they had been allowed to receive but sixpence a lecture from each scholar, they would have been emulous to have had many scholars. Every body will agree that it should be the interest of those who teach, to have scholars; and this is the case in our Universities. That they are too rich is certainly not true; for they have nothing good enough to keep a man of eminent learning with them for his life. In the foreign Universities a professorship is a high thing;—and therefore we find the most learned men abroad are in the Universities. It is not so with us.—I wish there were many places of a thousand a year at Oxford, to keep first-rate men of learning from quitting the University."

There is great justice in the foregoing remarks. It cannot be doubted that the dignity of learning ought to be more liberally supported in those illustrious seminaries of education, in behalf of which Dr. Johnson so handsomely pleads.

Vol. II. p. 59. Mentioning the "*Lives of the Poets by Cibber and other Hands*," in five pocket vols. published about thirty years ago, that work, as we apprehend, through wrong information, is here somewhat misrepresented. The passage is this :

Dr. Johnson told us (says Mr. B.) that the Lives of the Poets, &c. (as above) "were compiled by Mr. Shiels, a Scotchman, one of his amanuenses. The booksellers, said he, gave Theophilus Cibber, who was then in prison, ten guineas to allow *Mr. Cibber* to be put upon the title-page, as the author ; by this, a double imposition was intended : in the first place, that it was the work of a Cibber at all ; and, in the second place, that it was the work of old Cibber."

This account is very inaccurate. The following statement of facts we know to be true, in every material circumstance.—Shiels was the principal collector and digester of the materials for the work : but as he was very raw in authorship, an indifferent writer in prose,[1] and his language full of Scotticisms, Cibber, who was a clever, lively fellow,[2] and then soliciting employment among the booksellers, was engaged to correct the style and diction of the whole work,[3] then intended to make only four vols. with power to alter, expunge, or add, as he liked. He was also to supply *notes*, occasionally, especially concerning those dramatic poets with whom he had been chiefly conversant. He also engaged to write several of the Lives ; which (as we are told,) he, accordingly, performed. He was farther

[1] He had a good taste in poetry, and was author of some poetical pieces : but they were of no great note. Thomson was his model.

[2] THE. was really an ingenious man ; inheriting much of his father's spirit, his literary turn, and his disposition for extravagance ; a great voluptuary ; and every way indiscreet in his conduct. He acknowledged that the following *jest* related of him, was a fact, *viz.* that once, when applying to his father, the Laureate, for a supply of cash, the old gentleman said "*The.* you are an expensive dog ! When I was of your age, I never spent half so much of my father's money." "Sir," said young Graceless, "I don't know how that might be, but I know you have spent a vast deal of *my* father's money."

[3] They were also desirous of some *name* to it, disliking anonymous publications, especially to compilements ; and that of CIBBER was deemed of better sound than the name of SHIELS, which was totally unknown to the public ; and THE. accordingly consented.

useful in striking out all the Jacobitical and Tory sentiments, which Shiels had industriously interspersed wherever he could bring them in;—and, as the success of the work appeared, after all, very doubtful, he was contented with twenty-one pounds for his labour, beside a few sets of the books, to disperse among his friends.—Shiels had nearly seventy pounds; beside the advantage of many of the best lives in the work being communicated by friends to the undertaking; and for which Mr. Shiels had the same consideration as for the rest, being paid by the sheet, for the whole. He was, however, so angry with his Whiggish supervisor (THE. like his father, being a violent stickler for the political principles which prevailed in the reign of George the Second,) for so unmercifully mutilating his copy, and scouting his politics, that he wrote Cibber a challenge: but was prevented from sending it, by the publisher, who fairly laughed him out of his fury. The proprietors, too, were discontented, in the end, on account of Mr. Cibber's unexpected industry; for his corrections and alterations in the proof-sheets were so numerous and considerable, that the printer made for them a grievous addition to his bill; and, in fine, all parties were dissatisfied. On the whole, the work was productive of no profit to the undertakers; who had agreed, in case of success, to make Cibber a present of some addition to the twenty guineas which he had received, and for which his receipt is now in the booksellers' hands. We are farther assured, that he actually obtained an additional sum, when he, soon after, (in the year 1758,) unfortunately embarked for Dublin, on an engagement for one of the theatres there: but the ship was cast away, and every person on board perished. There were about 60 passengers, among whom was the Earl of Drogheda, with many other persons of consequence and property.

As to the alleged design of making the compilement pass for the work of old Mr. Cibber, the charge seems to have been founded on a somewhat uncharitable construction. We are assured that the thought was not harboured by some of the proprietors, who are still living, and we hope that it did not occur to the first designer of the work, who

was also the printer of it; and who bore a respectable character.

We have been induced to enter, thus circumstantially, into the foregoing detail of facts relating to the Lives of the Poets compiled by Messrs. Cibber and Shiels, from a sincere regard to that sacred principle of TRUTH, to which Dr. Johnson so rigidly adhered, according to the best of his knowledge; and which, we believe, *no consideration* would have prevailed on him to violate.—In regard to the matter, which we now dismiss, he had, no doubt, been misled by partial and wrong information: Shiels was the Doctor's amanuensis; he had quarrelled with Cibber; it is natural to suppose that he told his story in his own way; and it is certain that *he* was not "a very sturdy moralist."

Speaking of poets, and poetry, Johnson declared that poetry *is not translatable*. Mr. B. had given his opinion, that the translation of poetry could be only *imitation*. The Doctor's remark was this:

"You may translate books of science exactly. You may also translate history, in so far as it is not embellished with oratory, which is poetical. Poetry, indeed, cannot be translated; and, therefore, it is the poets that preserve languages; for we would not be at the trouble to learn a language, if we could have all that is written in it just as well in a translation. But as the beauties of poetry cannot be preserved in any language except that in which it was originally written, we learn the language."

This remark is certainly just; and it may stand as an apology for the general failure of translators, in their endeavours to transfuse the beauties of ancient poets into a modern language, or from one modern language into another; since none can be totally condemned for not performing impossibilities. Dr. Johnson's opinion may, however, have some tendency toward discouraging future attempts at poetic translation:—in which case, the generality of readers, who have little learning, may be deprived of a considerable portion of their literary entertainment and information.

We were struck with the *sombre* complexion of a remark which fell from Dr. Johnson, on his visiting, in company with our author, Lord Scarsdale's fine seat, Keddlestone, near Derby. Mr. B. was delighted with the magnificence of the building, with the extensive park, and with the fine verdure, covered with deer, cattle, and sheep. The number of old oaks, of an immense size, "filled me, (says he,) with a sort of respectful admiration; for one of them, sixty pounds was offered. The excellent smooth gravel roads; the large piece of water, formed by his Lordship from some small brooks, with a handsome barge upon it; the venerable Gothic church, now the family chapel, just by the house; in short, the grand groupe of objects agitated and distended my mind in a most agreeable manner. '*One should think*,' said I, '*that the proprietor of all this must be happy.*'—'Nay, Sir, (said Johnson,) all this excludes but one evil—Poverty.'"

The remark of a lady on this grave and unseasonable reflection was admirable: "It is true, all this excludes only one EVIL; but how much GOOD does it let in!" Vol. II. p. 148, *the note.*

The following passage, among a multitude of others, which might be selected from these multifarious volumes, will serve to evince the amazing fertility and force of Johnson's imagination, even when employed on the most uncommon topics, and on such events as usually pass unnoticed by ordinary minds:

Vol. II. p. 242, "We talk'd," says our biographer, "of a gentleman who, we apprehended, was gradually involving his circumstances, by bad management. Dr. Johnson observed, that 'wasting a fortune, is evaporation by a thousand imperceptible means. If it were a stream, they would stop it,—were he a gamester, it could be said he had hopes of winning. Were he a bankrupt in trade, he might have grown rich; but he has neither spirit to spend, nor resolution to spare. He does not spend fast enough to have pleasure from it. He has the crime of prodigality, and the wretchedness of parsimony. If a man is killed in a duel, he is killed as many a one has been killed; but it is a sad thing to lie down and die, to bleed to death,

because he has not fortitude enough to sear the wound, or even to sow it up.'—I cannot, adds Mr. B. but pause a moment to admire the fecundity of fancy, and choice of language, which, in this instance, and, indeed, on almost all occasions, he displayed. It was well observed by Dr. Percy, now Bishop of Dromore, 'the conversation of Dr. Johnson is strong and clear, and may be compared to an antique statue, where every vein and muscle is distinct and bold. Ordinary conversation resembles an inferior cast.' "

It is now time for us to close our excerpts from a work that contains an almost inexhaustible store of wonderfully varied materials, from which not only this month's Review, but many Reviews, might be amply enriched. The great difficulty that we have had to encounter, in giving a sketch of Mr. B.'s performance, (for it is but a mere outline of it that we could pretend to offer to our readers,) was, the selection of passages, as proper specimens: but to convey an adequate idea of the admirable *sayings*,[1] *remarks*, and *literary correspondence*, of the distinguished genius whose life, works, and conversation, are the subject of these volumes, was impossible, within the limits of a periodical pamphlet of moderate size. We must, therefore, after all, refer, for farther satisfaction, to Mr. Boswell's complement at large; in which the candid reader, who seeks for rational entertainment, and moral instruction, will reap an abundant harvest; though he will, possibly, meet with some things that may neither prove acceptable to every taste, nor suit with every opinion.—We now come to the promised conclusion of this article—

[1] We cannot sufficiently commend our author for his accuracy in so uniformly preserving the exact style and diction of Johnson, in all the repetitions here given, of what was said by him in the various conversations that are rehearsed in this work; and it is moreover to be observed, that Mr. B. (a north Briton,) has so seldom made the Doctor utter a Scotticism! We have remarked, *en passant*, but two instances, viz. p. 26. of vol. ii. "The chaplain of a bishop whom I was to assist in writing some memoirs, could tell me *almost nothing*." Again, ib. p. 192, Addison, in one of his Spectators, commends the judgment of a king, who rewarded a man who had attained the art of darting barley-corns through the eye of a needle, by giving him a bushel of barley; on which Johnson remarked—"He *has been* a king of Scotland, where barley is scarce."

Mr. Boswell's general character of Dr. Johnson;[1] somewhat abbreviated, to save room.

"His figure was large, and well formed, and his countenance had the cast of an ancient statue; yet his appearance was rendered somewhat uncouth, by convulsive cramps, by the scars of that distemper which it was once imagined the royal touch could cure,[2] and by a slovenly mode of dress. He had the use of only one eye; yet so much does mind govern and even supply the deficiency of organs, that his visual perceptions, as far as they extended, were uncommonly quick and accurate. So morbid was his temperament, that he never knew the natural joy of a free and vigorous use of his limbs: when he walk'd, it was like the straggling gait of one in fetters; when he rode, he had no command or direction of his horse, but was carried as if in a balloon.[3] That, with his constitution and habits of life, he should have lived seventy-five years, is a proof that an inherent *vivida vis* is a powerful preservative of the human frame.

"Man, (continues the biographer,) is, in general, made up of contradictory qualities, and these will ever shew themselves in strange succession, where a consistency in appearance at least, if not in reality, has not been attained by long habits of philosophical discipline. In proportion to the native vigor of the mind, the contradictory qualities will be the more prominent, and more difficult to be adjusted; and therefore we are not to wonder that Johnson exhibited an eminent example of this remark which I have made upon human nature. At different times he seemed a different man, in some respects; not, however, in any great or essential article, on which he had fully employed his mind and settled certain principles of duty, but only in his manners, and in displays of argument and

[1] Our author observes in a note, that much of the original character of the Doctor, which was given of him in his (Mr. B.'s) Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, is here adopted.

[2] Johnson himself was actually *touched*, but not *cured*, by Q. Anne.

[3] Those who have seen the ungainly motions of an air balloon, in the original simplicity of its first exhibitions, before the *appendages* were contrived for the accommodation of aerial travellers, can best form an adequate idea of the propriety of this comparison; which, in our opinion, is very happily applied.

fancy in his talk. He was prone to superstition, but not to credulity. Though his imagination might incline him to a belief of the marvellous and the mysterious, his vigorous reason examined the evidence with jealousy. He was a sincere and zealous Christian, of high church of England and monarchical principles, which he would not tamely suffer to be questioned; and had, perhaps, at an early period, narrowed his mind somewhat too much, both as to religion and politics. His being impressed with the danger of extreme latitude in either, though he was of a very independent spirit, occasioned his appearing somewhat unfavourable to the prevalence of that noble freedom of spirit which is the best possession of man. Nor can it be denied that he had many prejudices, which, however, frequently suggested many of his pointed sayings, that rather shew a playfulness of fancy, than any settled malignity. He was steady and inflexible in maintaining the obligations of religion and morality, both from a regard for the order of society, and from a veneration for the Great Source of all order; correct, nay stern in his taste; hard to please, and easily offended; impetuous and irritable in his temper, but of a humane and benevolent heart, which shewed itself not only in a most liberal charity, as far as his circumstances would allow, but in a thousand instances of active benevolence. He was afflicted with a bodily disease which made him restless and fretful, and with a constitutional melancholy, the clouds of which darkened the brightness of his fancy, and gave a gloomy cast to the whole course of his thinking: we therefore ought not to wonder at his sallies of impatience and passion, especially when provoked by obtrusive ignorance, or presuming petulance; and allowance must be made for his uttering hasty and satirical sallies, even against his best friends. And surely, when it is considered that "amidst sickness and sorrow," he exerted his faculties in so many works for the benefit of mankind, and particularly that he achieved the great and admirable Dictionary of our language, we must be astonished at his resolution. The solemn text "of him to whom much is given, much will be required," seems to have been ever

present to his mind, in a rigorous sense, and to have made him dissatisfied with his labours, and acts of goodness, however comparatively great; so that the unavoidable consciousness of his superiority was, in that respect, a cause of disquiet. He suffered so much from this, and from the gloom which perpetually haunted him, and made solitude frightful, that it may be said of him, "if in this life only he had hope, he was of all men most miserable." He loved praise [1] when it was brought to him, but was too proud to seek for it. He was somewhat susceptible of flattery. As he was general and unconfined in his studies, he cannot be considered as master of any one particular science; but he had accumulated a vast and various collection of learning and knowledge, which was so arranged in his mind, as to be ever in readiness to be brought forth. His superiority over other learned men consisted chiefly in what may be called the art of thinking, the art of using his mind; a certain continual power of seizing the useful substance of all that he knew, and exhibiting it in a clear and forcible manner; so that knowledge which we often see to be no better than lumber in men of dull understandings, was, in him, true, evident, and actual wisdom. His moral precepts are practical, for they are drawn from an intimate acquaintance with human nature. His maxims carry conviction; for they are founded on the basis of common sense. His mind was so full of imagery, that he might have been perpetually a poet; yet it is remarkable, that however rich his prose is, in that respect, the poetical pieces which he wrote were in general not so, but rather strong sentiments, and acute observation, conveyed in good verse, particularly in heroic couplets. Though usually grave and even careful in his deportment, he possessed uncommon and peculiar powers of wit and humour; he frequently indulged himself in colloquial pleasantry; and the heartiest merriment was often enjoyed in his company: with this great advantage, that it was entirely

[1] Who that is conscious of having acted commendably, can possibly be indifferent to the praise which laudable intention and good conduct deserve; and which is as much the just reward of merit, of whatever kind, as money is in compensation for labour?

free from any poisonous tincture of vice or impiety; it was salutary to those who shared in it. He had accustomed himself to such accuracy in his common conversation, that he, at all times, delivered himself with a force, and elegant choice of expression, the effect of which was aided by his having a loud voice, and a slow deliberate utterance. He united a most logical head with a most fertile imagination, which gave him an extraordinary advantage in arguing; for he could reason close or wide, as he saw best for the moment. Exulting in his intellectual strength and dexterity, he could, when he pleased, be the greatest sophist that ever contended in the lists of declamation; and from a spirit of contradiction, and a delight in shewing his powers, he would often maintain the wrong side with equal warmth and ingenuity; so that when there was an audience, his real opinions could seldom be gathered from his talk; though, when he was in company with a single friend, he would discuss a subject with genuine fairness. But he was too conscientious to make error permanent, and pernicious, by deliberately writing it; and in all his numerous works he earnestly inculcated what appeared to him to be the truth. His piety was constant, and was the ruling principle of his conduct; and the more we consider his character, we shall be the more disposed to regard him with admiration and reverence."

Such is Mr. B.'s pourtraiture of this truly extraordinary man! the *drawing* of which we consider as sufficiently accurate, and the *colouring* as very little overcharged, or heightened; although a favourable likeness was, perhaps, (as we have already intimated, in the out-set of the present article,) in some degree intended:—as far, we mean to say, as might seem consistent with the truth of resemblance,—and no farther. On the whole, we cannot but consider the great ORIGINAL as really a wonderful and highly estimable character! As for the inelegance of his person, and the general boisterousness of his manner, when not in his pleasant moods and softer moments,—these are, comparatively, in our opinion, circumstances of so little account, that we shall conclude with repeating what was once admirably said of him, by the late Dr. Horne, bishop

of Norwich, and here recorded by our biographer:[1]— "To reject wisdom, because the person of him who communicates it is uncouth, and his manners are inelegant;— what is it, but to throw away a pine-apple, and assign for a reason, the roughness of its coat?"

Aug. 1793 Vol. 11 p. 361[2]

It should be recorded to the honour of literature, that, amid a variety of important political discussions and transactions, the death of a philosopher, who lived in an obscure part of the metropolis, has long attracted the public attention, and has so stimulated curiosity that every account of him has been perused with avidity. Some persons, with a peevish ill-nature, have remarked that Dr. Johnson is a *comet with the longest tail:* but the admirers of wit and learning, and the real friends of virtue, will rejoice in the celebrity which he has acquired, and will consider his growing fame as propitious to morality. Mr. Malone calls him the brightest ornament of the eighteenth century. Of such a man, we wish to hear much;—and of such a man, therefore, we must not complain that much has been written.

Mr. Murphy brings up the rear of the Johnsonian biographers, with an account of the life and genius of his illustrious literary friend, composed with ease and elegance; in which he records, with much satisfaction, that he enjoyed the conversation and friendship of Dr. Johnson for more than thirty years; and he feelingly expresses the regret, which, to the present hour, the loss of such a friend inflicts on his mind. Writing under such avowed impressions, he is aware of the suspicion of partiality; and, with the view of obviating it, he well remarks that "regret, he knows, has secret bribes, by which the judgment may be influenced, and partial affection may be carried beyond the bounds of truth. In the present case, however, nothing needs to be disguised, and exaggerated praise is unnecessary. It is an observation of the younger

[1] Who quotes the words from the *Olla Podrida*, a work noticed in our Review, vol. lxxx. p. 135.

[2] Art. I. *An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* By Arthur Murphy, Esq. 8vo. pp. 187. 4*s*. Boards. Longman, Cadell, &c. 1792.

Pliny, in his epistle to his friend of Tacitus, that history ought never to magnify matters of fact, because worthy actions require nothing but the truth. *Nam nec historia debet egredi veritatem, et honeste factis veritas sufficit.* This rule the present biographer promises shall guide his pen throughout the following narrative."

To the question, why another account of Dr. Johnson's life, in addition to those already written, is now offered to the notice of the public, the author makes the following ingenious and satisfactory answer:

"The proprietors of Johnson's works thought the life which they prefixed to their former edition,[1] too unwieldy for republication. The prodigious variety of foreign matter, introduced into that performance, seemed to overload the memory of Dr. Johnson, and in the account of his own life to leave him hardly visible. They wished to have a more concise, and, for that reason, perhaps a more satisfactory account, such as may exhibit a just picture of the man, and keep him the principal figure in the fore-ground of his own picture. To comply with that request is the design of this Essay, which the writer undertakes with a trembling hand. He has no discoveries, no secret anecdotes, no occasional controversy, no sudden flashes of wit and humour, no private conversation, and no new facts to embellish his work."

Thus modestly Mr. Murphy speaks of his performance: but though the labourers, who have preoccupied the field, have been so industrious as to leave him scarcely anything to glean, yet his Essay is not altogether without novelty; and the task which has been left him, of giving a short yet full, a faithful yet temperate, history of Dr. Johnson, has been ably executed.

In the biography of literature and science, *Stemmata quid faciunt*? The pedigree of a philosopher can neither augment nor diminish his fame. Socrates and Epictetus require no ancestry to ennoble them. Concerning the family of Johnson, it would be alike superfluous and unamusing to inquire; that it was obscure, is well known; and, to use one of his own observations, "there is little

[1] The Life of Johnson by Sir John Hawkins.

pleasure in the anecdotes of beggary." Mr. Murphy therefore does not waste his time in endeavouring to trace with minuteness the well-known pedigree of his friend, but hastens to exhibit him, standing alone, great and illustrious; independent of ancestry, and of the adventitious aid of wealth.

The difficulties with which Johnson long contended, his slow progress from obscurity to fame, and from poverty to an easy competence, are well described. His present biographer apologizes for the uniformity of his narrative: but the publications of a writer, like the battles and sieges of a general, are the circumstances which must fix the several æras of his life.

The political prejudices which existed in Johnson's mind were strong; and some little censure is due to him for his easy faith, occasioned by his prejudices, in the forgeries of Lauder. That he should have appeared before the public in company with this defamer of Milton, is to be lamented; yet his renunciation of all connection with Lauder, when his forgeries were detected, is only a proof of his having believed (a common weakness of worthy minds!) without examination, — not that he was an accomplice with the impostor.

Throughout this biographical Essay, the prominent features of Johnson's character are delineated with a masterly pencil, and the light and shade are well distributed. What was undertaken is performed.

The following quotation from Horace is given by Mr. Murphy, as containing Johnson's picture in miniature:

> "*Iracundior est paulo, minus aptus acutis*
> *Naribus horum hominum, rideri possit, eo quod*
> *Rusticius tonso toga destuit, et male laxus*
> *In pede calceus hæret. At est bonus, ut melior vir*
> *Non alius quisquam; at tibi amicus; at ingenium ingens*
> *Inculto latet hoc sub corpore.*"

Subjoined to the account of this celebrated man, is a succinct review of his writings. Here Mr. M. displays his own learning, judgment, and taste. The mention of the *Rambler* leads him to appreciate the respective merits of Addison and Johnson. His comparison of these eminent

writers is a splendid part of his Essay, and is of too much value to be withheld :

" The Rambler may be considered as Johnson's great work. It was the basis of that high reputation which went on increasing to the end of his days. The circulation of those periodical essays was not, at first, equal to their merit. They had not, like the Spectators, the art of charming by variety ; and indeed how could it be expected ? The wits of Queen Anne's reign sent their contributions to the Spectator ; and Johnson stood alone. A stage-coach, says Sir Richard Steele, must go forward on stated days, whether there are passengers or not. So it was with the Rambler, every Tuesday and Saturday, for two years. In this collection Johnson is the great moral teacher of his countrymen ; his essays form a body of ethics ; the observations on life and manners are acute and instructive ; and the papers, professedly critical, serve to promote the cause of literature. It must, however, be acknowledged, that a settled gloom hangs over the author's mind ; and all the essays, except eight or ten, coming from the same fountain-head, no wonder that they have the raciness of the soil from which they sprung. Of this uniformity Johnson was sensible. He used to say, that if he had joined a friend or two, who would have been able to intermix papers of a sprightly turn, the collection would have been more miscellaneous, and, by consequence, more agreeable to the generality of readers. This he used to illustrate by repeating two beautiful stanzas from his own Ode to Cave, or *Sylvanus Urban* :

Non ulla Musis pagina gratior,
Quam quæ severis ludicra jungere
Novit, fatigatamque nugis
Utilibus recreare mentem.

Texente nymphis serta Lycoride,
Rosæ ruborem sic viola adjuvat
Immistra, sic Iris refulget
Æthereis variata fucis.

" It is remarkable, that the pomp of diction, which has been objected to Johnson, was first assumed in the Rambler. His Dictionary was going on at the same time, and, in the

course of that work, as he grew familiar with technical and scholastic words, he thought that the bulk of his readers were equally learned; or at least would admire the splendour and dignity of the style. And yet it is well known, that he praised in Cowley the ease and unaffected structure of the sentences. Cowley may be placed at the head of those who cultivated a clear and natural style. Dryden, Tillotson, and Sir William Temple, followed. Addison, Swift, and Pope, with more correctness, carried our language well nigh to perfection. Of Addison, Johnson was used to say, *He is the Raphael of Essay Writers.* How he differed so widely from such elegant models is a problem not to be solved, unless it be true that he took an early tincture from the writers of the last century, particularly Sir Thomas Browne. Hence the peculiarities of his style, new combinations, sentences of an unusual structure, and words derived from the learned languages. His own account of the matter is, "When common words were less pleasing to the ear, or less distinct in their significations, I familiarized the terms of philosophy, by applying them to popular ideas." But he forgot the observation of Dryden: *If too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed, not to assist the natives, but to conquer them.* There is, it must be admitted, a swell of language, often out of all proportion to the sentiment; but there is, in general, a fullness of mind, and the thought seems to expand with the sound of the words. Determined to discard colloquial barbarisms and licentious idioms, he forgot the elegant simplicity that distinguishes the writings of Addison. He had what Locke calls a roundabout view of his subject; and, though he was never tainted, like many modern wits, with the ambition of shining in paradox, he may be fairly called an ORIGINAL THINKER. His reading was extensive. He treasured in his mind whatever was worthy of notice, but he added to it from his own meditation. He collected, *quæ reconderet, auctaque promeret.* Addison was not so profound a thinker. He was *born to write, converse, and live with ease*; and he found an early patron in Lord Somers. He depended, however, more upon a fine taste, than the vigour of his mind. His Latin

Poetry shews, that he relished, with a just selection, all the refined and delicate beauties of the Roman classics; and when he cultivated his native language, no wonder that he formed that graceful style, which has been so justly admired; simple, yet elegant; adorned, yet never over-wrought; rich in allusion, yet pure and perspicuous; correct, without labour, and, though sometimes deficient in strength, yet always musical. His essays, in general, are on the surface of life; if ever original, it was in pieces of humour. Sir Roger de Coverly, and the Tory Fox-hunter, need not to be mentioned. Johnson had a fund of humour, but he did not know it, nor was he willing to descend to the familiar idiom and the variety of diction which that mode of composition required. The letter, in the Rambler, No. 12, from a young girl that wants a place, will illustrate this observation. Addison possessed an unclouded imagination, alive to the first objects of nature and of art. He reaches the sublime without any apparent effort. When he tells us, "If we consider the fixed stars as so many oceans of flame, that are each of them attended with a different set of planets; if we still discover new firmaments and new lights, that are sunk further in those unfathomable depths of æther, we are lost in a labyrinth of suns and worlds, and confounded with the magnificence and immensity of nature"; the ease, with which this passage rises to unaffected grandeur, is the secret charm that captivates the reader. Johnson is always lofty; he seems, to use Dryden's phrase, to be o'er-inform'd with meaning, and his words do not appear to himself adequate to his conception. He moves in state, and his periods are always harmonious. His Oriental Tales are in the true style of Eastern magnificence, and yet none of them are so much admired as the Visions of Mirza. In matters of criticism, Johnson is never the echo of preceding writers. He thinks and decides for himself. If we except the Essays on the Pleasures of Imagination, Addison cannot be called a philosophical critic. His moral Essays are beautiful; but in that province nothing can exceed the Rambler, though Johnson used to say, that the Essay on *The burthens of mankind* (in the Spectator, No. 558) was the most ex-

quisite he had ever read. Talking of himself, Johnson said, "Topham Beauclerk has wit, and everything comes from him with ease; but when I say a good thing, I seem to labour." When we compare him with Addison, the contrast is still stronger. Addison lends grace and ornament to truth; Johnson gives it force and energy. Addison makes virtue amiable; Johnson represents it as an awful duty. Addison insinuates himself with an air of modesty; Johnson commands like a dictator; but a dictator in his splendid robes, not labouring at the plough. Addison is the Jupiter of Virgil, with placid serenity talking to Venus:

"Vultu, quo cœlum tempestatesque serenat."

Johnson is JUPITER TONANS: he darts his lightning, and rolls his thunder in the cause of virtue and piety. The language seems to fall short of his ideas; he pours along, familiarizing the terms of philosophy, with bold inversions, and sonorous periods; but we may apply to him what Pope has said of Homer: "It is the sentiment that swells and fills out the diction, which rises with it, and forms itself about it; like glass in the furnace, which grows to a greater magnitude, as the breath within is more powerful, and the heat more intense."

Though all the biographers of Johnson mention his desultory reading, Mr. Murphy, we apprehend, has gone too far when he says that "it may be questioned whether, excepting the Bible," (is the sacred volume to be excepted?) "he ever read any book entirely through."—To take no notice of the books which Mr. Boswell mentioned to have been entirely perused by Dr. J., it should have occurred to Mr. M. that it was impossible for his hero to have been a man of learning without the regular perusal of many books. How could a knowledge of the succession of historical events, for instance, be attained, without reading history in regular detail? This cannot be accomplished by *snatches*.

We lament, with Mr. M. that we have in this country no academy of polite literature; and we sincerely wish that some of the money lavished in the destruction of our

species had been appropriated to this more noble and more useful purpose.

For a detailed account of Johnson's table-talk, Mr. Boswell must be consulted: but to those who wish for a more brief narrative of the incidents of this philosopher's life, combined with a view of his character and writings, we recommend this Essay. In the course, also, of our examination of Sir John Hawkins's edition of Johnson's works, (Rev. vols. lxxvi. and lxxvii,) a concise yet copious account of the life and writings of this great moralist was given to the world.

May 1796 Vol. 20 p. 18[1]

So numerous have been the lives and characters of our great moralist and philologer, that we little expected a new work on the same subject, after Mr. Murphy had so ably brought up the rear of the biographic corps. It is, however, a proof that the theme was not thought to be exhausted, but was still likely to interest the public.

In the course of our reading or recollection, we do not remember a similar instance, either in antient or in modern times, of any man, however he may have distinguished himself by "compass, pencil, sword, or pen," having, within ten or eleven years from the time of his decease, been the object of so much literary notice; and not from ordinary or obscure writers, but from persons of acknowledged abilities and established fame. It is probable that, however this extraordinary person may have irritated party, mortified pride, or awakened envy in his contemporaries, by the peculiarity of his opinions and manners, as well as by his gigantic abilities, posterity will admire the depth, force, eloquence, moral purity, and originality, of his writings, as long as the language of which he has made use shall remain intelligible.

Dr. Anderson speaks of his predecessors, not as a rival who wished to supplant them, but rather as a panegyrist desirous of recommending them to public favour. He boasts not of a personal acquaintance with Johnson, but

[1] Art. III. *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D. with critical Observations on his Works. By Robert Anderson, M.D. 8vo. pp. 307. 5*s*. Boards. J. and A. Arch. 1795.

acknowledges, in his prolegomena, that "the facts stated in the present account are chiefly taken from the narratives of Sir John Hawkins and Mr. Boswell; with the addition of such particulars of the progress of his mind and fortunes, as the subsequent narrative of Mr. Murphy, and the most respectable periodical publications of the last ten years have supplied." However, these facts and particulars are well selected and arranged; connected, also, and illustrated, by reflections flowing from a mind and a pen which are congenial with those of the hero of the narrative; and wherever Dr. A. has quitted his acknowledged guides, he has manifested abilities far above the humble character of a compiler. After having transcribed from Mr. Boswell the account which he has given of the early progress of Dr. Johnson's mind in religious concerns, Dr. A. offers the following reflection; which, we are certain, will be particularly acceptable to the friends of true piety, in these times of scepticism and incredulity:

"Serious impressions of religion, from particular incidents, it is certain, have been experienced by many pious persons; though it must be acknowledged that weak minds, from an erroneous supposition that no man is in a state of grace who has not felt a particular conversion, have, in some cases, brought a degree of ridicule upon them; a ridicule of which it is inconsiderate or unfair to make a general application. How seriously Johnson was impressed with a sense of religion, from this time forward,[1] appears from the whole tenor of his life and writings. Religion was the predominant object of his thoughts; though he seems not to have attained all the tranquillity and assurance in his practice of its duties that are so earnestly to be desired. His sentiments, upon points of abstract virtue and rectitude, were in the highest degree elevated and generous, but he was unfortunate enough to have the sublimity of his mind degraded by the hypochondriacal propensities of his animal constitution. The serenity, the independence, and the exultation of religion, were sentiments to which he was a stranger. He saw the Almighty

[1] This alludes to his perusal of Law's "Serious Call," while a student at Oxford.

in a different light from what he is represented in the purer page of the gospel; and he trembled in the presence of Infinite Goodness. Those tenets of the church of England, which are most nearly allied to Calvinism, were congenial to his general feelings, and they made an early impression, which habits confirmed, and which reason, if ever exerted, could not efface. At the latter part of his life these terrors had a considerable effect; nor was their influence lost, till disease had weakened his powers, and blunted his feelings."

After the obloquy thrown on the King for granting, and on Johnson for receiving, a pension, Dr. A. candidly says,

"The affair itself was equally honourable to the giver and the receiver. The offer was clogged with no stipulations for party services, and accepted under no implied idea of being recompensed by political writings. It was perfectly understood by all parties, that the pension was merely honorary. It is true that Johnson did afterwards write political pamphlets in favour of administration; but it was at a period long subsequent to the grant of his pension, and in support of a minister to whom he owed no personal obligation. It was for the establishment of opinions, which, however unconstitutional, he had uniformly held, and publicly avowed."

Not only rival authors and patriots grumbled, but needy courtiers; who observed that 300*l.* a year would have supported a *man of fashion.* Perhaps future historians will find no royal remuneration better bestowed during this long reign, than this pension to a man of such splendid and useful abilities as Johnson, "not for what he *was* to do, but for what he *had already done.*"

The author's observation on the late Mr. Thrale's attachment to Johnson evidently flows from a good heart:

"There is something in the conduct of this worthy possessor of wealth, which the mind loves to contemplate. Next to the possession of great powers, the most enviable qualities are a capacity to discover, and an inclination to honour them. To the credit of Thrale, let it be recorded, that the patron of literature and talents, of which Johnson

sought in vain for the traces in Chesterfield, he found realized in Thrale."

Dr. Anderson's encomiums on the preface and notes to Johnson's edition of Shakespear,—which did not satisfy those enthusiastic admirers of our exquisite dramatic bard, at the time of publication, who seemed unwilling to allow that there were any spots in our theatrical luminary,—seem perfectly just, and will now be readily granted by all but Johnson's enemies :

" What he performed as a commentator has no small share of merit, though his researches were not so ample, and his investigations so acute as they might have been. He has enriched his edition with a concise account of each play, and of its characteristic excellence. In the sagacity of his emendatory criticisms, and the happiness of his interpretations of obscure passages, he surpasses every editor of this poet. Mr. Malone confesses, ' that Johnson's vigorous and comprehensive understanding threw more light on his author, than all his predecessors had done.' His *Preface* has been pronounced by Mr. Malone to be the finest composition in our language ; and having regard to its subject and extent, it certainly would be difficult to name one possessing a superior claim to such superlative praise. Whether we consider the beauty and vigour of its composition, the abundance and classical selection of its allusions, the justness of the general precepts of criticism, and its accurate estimate of the excellencies or defects of his author, it is equally admirable. He seems to raise his talents upon a level with those of his poet, upon whose works he sits as a critical judge, to rival, by the lustre of his praises, the splendour of the original, and to follow this eagle of British poetry through all his gyres, with as keen an eye, and upon as strong a wing. The *Preface* to his *Dictionary*, correct as it is, must yield the palm of excellence to that prefixed to his Shakespeare ; but it yields it only because the subject was less favourable to the full display of his powers."

The sentence passed by this biographer on Johnson's conversation we think not merely severe, but unjust. It was only in large companies, at times when he was

irritated by arrogance, and when all were treasuring up his decisions, that he talked for victory: but when his opinions were modestly asked by his friends in private, even by Boswell himself, who put questions to him which no one else had the courage to do, we may be "sure that he spoke the sentiments of his conviction";—and on these occasions he frequently became so eloquent, copious, and accurate, that he seemed reading a well-written book. If Dr. A. does not allow that his conversations with Boswell were "much distinguished by flashes of wit and humour," we know not where to seek these qualities. We imagine, however, that, if Dr. A., who seems so desirous of being candid, had ever heard Johnson converse with those whom he loved, and who respected him, we should not have had the following period on the subject:

"But for the inferiority of his conversation, to our opinion of the man, he has himself made a prophetic apology, in his first interview with his biographer, who was destined to retail it. 'People may be taken in once, who imagine that an author is greater in private life than another man. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertions.'"

We are very certain that Mr. Boswell has injured the sentiment of his friend, by the cant expression of "being *taken in*," which Johnson would never have either written or spoken. The subsequent period of Dr. A. allows him so many virtues, and so candidly apologizes for his failings, (*vices* he had none,) that, if it had been the ultimate delineation of his character, his friends and admirers would have been thankful to his biographer for its lenity:

"With these defects (says Dr. A.) there was, however, scarcely a virtue of which he was not in principle possessed. He was humane, charitable, affectionate, and generous. His most intemperate sallies were the effects of an irritable habit; he offended only to repent. To the warm and active benevolence of his heart, all his friends have borne testimony. 'He had nothing,' says Goldsmith, 'of the bear, but his skin.' Misfortune had only to form her claim, in order to found her right to the use of his purse, or the exercise of his talents. His house was an asylum

for the unhappy, beyond what a regard to personal convenience would have allowed; and his income was distributed in the support of his inmates, to an extent greater than general prudence would have permitted. The most honourable testimony to his moral and social character, is the cordial esteem of his friends and acquaintances. He was known by no man by whom his loss was not regretted. Another great feature of his mind, was the love of independence. While he felt the strength of his own powers, he despised, except in one instance, pecuniary aid. His pension has been often mentioned, and subjected him to severe imputations. But let those, who, like Johnson, had no patrimony, who were not always willing to labour, and felt the constant recurrence of necessities, reject, without an adequate reason, an independent income, which left his sentiments free, and required neither the servility of adulation, nor the labours of service. It is not uncommon to see a desire to be independent, degenerate into avarice. Johnson did not feel it early, for his benevolence counteracted it; but he declined going into Italy, when worth 1500*l.* besides his pension, because of the expence; and we see the surly dignity, which formerly spurned at an obligation, relaxed, in his refusal of Dr. Brocklesby's assistance, and Lord Thurlow's very delicate offer of the same kind. Some little censure is due to him for his easy faith, occasioned by his political prejudices, in the forgeries of Lauder. That he should have appeared in public, in company with this defamer of Milton, is to be lamented. Yet his renunciation of all connection with Lauder, when his forgeries were detected, is only a proof of his having believed (a common weakness of worthy minds) without examination, not that he was an accomplice with the impostor."

Johnson always preferred conversation to reading, though it were with the lowest mechanics; and he constantly listened to professional men with respect. His disputes were chiefly with those pretenders to that knowledge and science, of which he was himself at least equally qualified to judge.

For many of his *prejudices*, his warmest friends and

admirers are unable to apologize :—but, when we are told, on the authority of Mr. Boswell,

" That he was so prone to superstition as to make it a rule that a particular foot should constantly make the first actual movement, when he came close to the threshold of any door or passage which he was about to enter, or to quit " ;

we not only doubt but are able to dispute the fact. He had convulsive motions of the hands as well as of the feet, occasioned by St. Vitus's dance, which, being involuntary, could not be ascribed to a superstitious arrangement of his steps. His anxiety to ascertain the immateriality of the soul, and the doctrine of a future state, accounts for his solicitude " to give authenticity to stories of apparitions, and his eagerness to credit the existence of second sight, while he appeared scrupulous and sceptical as to common facts."

Of his merit as an *author*, a *philologist*, a *biographer*, a *critic*, a *novelist*, a *political writer*, and a *poet*, Dr. A. has in general done him great justice. As a *critic*, he has admirably emblazoned Johnson's excellencies, without concealing his defects ; the principal of which are certainly the offspring of prejudice and want of taste for almost all poetry except heroic and didactic. Perhaps his defective sight prevented him from studying nature, and from enjoying " the silent beauties of creation." Dr. A. however, after having censured Johnson's severity, and seeming unwillingness to bestow praise, concludes his character of him as a critic in the most liberal, eloquent, and, we think, just and accurate manner :

" The present writer (says he) is under no apprehension of being charged with an unjustifiable partiality in this opinion of him, by those who know his disposition and the habits of his life. All that is great and genuinely good in Johnson, have had no warmer encomiast. He has uniformly praised his genius, his learning, his good sense, the strength of his reasonings, the sagacity of his critical decisions, the happiness of his illustrations, and the animation and energy of his style : he has acknowledged that there is no satiety in the delight he inspires on moral and

religious themes ; and he makes no scruple to declare, that, though there are many opinions erroneous, and many observations improper, a great part of his *Lives of the Poets* is such as no one but himself could have executed, and in which he will not be followed with success."

What Dr. A. has said of Johnson as a *moralist*, a *novelist*, and a *letter-writer*, is written with great force, elegance, and discrimination. The only occasion, on which our candid and judicious author abandons him to unqualified censure, is in speaking of him as a *political writer*. Johnson would never allow a Whig to be right on any occasion, and the Whigs were even with him. Moderation and candour, however, are seldom to be expected to extend to politics, however inherent in the writer on other occasions ; and many readers, who are partial to Johnson's writings on other subjects, have no mercy on his *Toryism*. It is to be feared that we have few writers of our own history or politics, on whose veracity a foreigner or an unprejudiced native, desirous of impartial and accurate information, can depend. From the earliest period of our history, we have constantly had two contending parties to warp our judgments : Britons and Saxons, Saxons and Normans, White Rose and Red, Catholics and Protestants, Cavaliers and Round-heads, Whig and Tory, High Church and Low, Jacobite and Hanoverian, Aristocrat and Democrat ! Though these distinctions have been often fatal to the peace of the country, however, as well as to the fame if not the genius of writers who have enlisted under the banner of any one of them, it is perhaps from these crude acidities and internal fermentations that the liberty, which we acquired at an earlier period than the rest of Europe, has been derived.

Johnson's *piety* is treated by Dr. A. with a degree of candour, respect, and reverence, and in a style of gravity and religious sentiments, superior to any of his preceding biographers ; and a fair and impressive apology is made even for his *meditations*, which have been often treated with ridicule.

His *style* was suited to his ideas, which were inexpressible by common words :—but Dr. A. judiciously warns those

from using his language, whose ideas are of a more diminutive size than those of their prototype.

As a *poet*, our biographer says all that can be said with candour of Johnson's excellence and defects; and in performing this task, he has given an analysis of his hero's tragedy of *Irene* in a very masterly manner. The fine passages and sentiments which it contains will probably keep it from oblivion, as they have saved the tragedy of *Cato*; neither of these dramas having sufficient merit of fable and character to support frequent representation: but, in the tranquillity of the closet, they will always have their admirers among learned readers who are pleased with "unaffecting elegance, and chill philosophy."

His Latin *poetry* seems fairly classed with that of other admired writers in a language that allows no new expressions and ideas; and in which all that the most successful writer can do is to crop here and there a flower on classic ground, merely to shew how well he is acquainted with its productions.

The discussion of this subject is followed by a seemingly definitive sentence on Johnson as a writer, with which the work might have been well terminated:

"Upon the whole, the various productions of Johnson show a life spent in study and meditation. It may be fairly allowed, as he used to say of himself, that *he has written his share*. His oddities and infirmities in common life will, after a while, be overlooked and forgotten; but his writings will remain a monument of his genius and learning; still more and more studied and admired, while Britons shall continue to be characterized by a love of elegance and sublimity, of good sense and virtue. In the works of Johnson, the reader will find a perpetual source of pleasure and instruction. With due precaution, men may learn to give to their style elegance, harmony, and precision; they may be taught to think with vigour and perspicuity; and all, by a diligent attention to his writings, may advance in virtue."

No preceding biographer of Johnson has here been mentioned without praise and quotation: so candid, and, indeed, so courteous, is Dr. Anderson; and this is the

more extraordinary, as his own powers of writing and thinking are of no common sort. The characters which have been extracted from Mr. Boswell, Mrs. Piozzi, Dr. Towers, Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Murphy, Miss Seward, and Mr. Courtney, have appeared so recently, that they will probably be familiar to most of the readers of the present work.

Boswell's anecdotes and *memorabilia* certainly form a treasure peculiar to the biography of this country. Mrs. Piozzi drew from the life at longer and more frequent sittings, perhaps, than any of Johnson's biographers; and though that lady's admiration of the features and tints of his mind was, perhaps, at last a little fatigued, and she became less partial to the subject than at his first sittings, yet the great outline of her picture is well drawn, notwithstanding the colouring may perhaps be less gay and brilliant than it would have been in an earlier stage of their acquaintance.

Though Dr. A. has tenderly touched most of the failings of his hero in his own remarks, he has not suppressed the bitterest invectives that have flowed from the pen of others. We could have wished that, in a juridical capacity, after a critical and careful perusal of his works, and of the lives and characters of him by preceding writers,—as well as considering all the evidence of friends and foes who had personal knowledge of him, and an opportunity of contemplating his private character at leisure,—our author had summed up the evidence, and passed sentence conscientiously, from the dictates of his own heart and judgment.

"To draw his frailties from their dread abode" can now only gratify his enemies and invalidate his valuable precepts. It is necessary that a moral writer should be respected, as well as admired. All Johnson's biographers, and the writers who have drawn his character, have agreed that, though he was a sincere Christian and a man of unblemished integrity and truth, he had his failings, his prejudices, and his weaknesses; yet he is stigmatized by none with *vice*, except by Miss Seward; who tells us that "Envy (the mother of many vices) was the bosom

serpent of this literary despot." If Miss S. be accurate in her assertion, it invalidates the account of his benevolence, charity, and friendship given by his other biographers, particularly Dr. A., who seems unwilling to look at Johnson's dark side. Of this we are certain, that, though Johnson may not have been so civil to this lady's productions as she expected, yet had *she* died first, regarding her at least as an acquaintance, if not as a friend, *he* would not have tried to blast her character in a magazine.

We could soften censure on account of many of Johnson's infirmities, from our own knowledge; and as this is probably the last time that we shall have to review the life of this venerable writer, whose virtues and abilities we have always respected, and whose station will not be soon filled, we cannot resist the wish to take our leave of him with good-humour.

We have already observed that Johnson, during colloquial debate, in order to obtain victory over arrogance of assertion, and perhaps to manifest his ingenuity and dialectic powers, became a sophist, and sustained positions to which he would never have set his name; and we will add that, if ever the mind of an author was laid open to public view without reservation or disguise, it seems to have been that of Johnson in his printed works.

With respect to his reverence and partiality for the religion of his country, which have been styled *bigotry*, we are fearful that some such intolerant spirit has manifested itself in Scotland (where our liturgy is still called *an ill-mumbled mass*,) against the Catholics in days of fanaticism, and by the Catholics against heretics of all kinds;—and perhaps the present liberality, enlargement, and indiscriminate toleration of all religions and all sects, do not arise so much from *respect* for the religion of others, as from *indifference* for our own. Johnson was so much in earnest in his religious belief and practice, that deviations from the rites and ceremonies of our own church were offensive to him; particularly, if those deviations leaned towards what he thought the irreverent plainness of Calvin, or the total incredulity of French philosophers. To the supererogation of Catholics, Methodists, and Moravians,

he was extremely charitable: but for the plain coat of Jack, without button or loop, he had no reverence. Yet there were individuals among Dissenters whom he highly respected: such as Dr. Watts, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Beattie, Dr. Blair, the late Dr. Rose, and several worthy ministers of the church of Scotland, with whom he made acquaintance in his tour to the Hebrides. Much of his pretended abuse of the Presbyterians and Whigs was more playful than malignant. If he talked of *Presbyterian dogs*, and *stinking Whigs*, he meant no greater reproach than the Dissenters and Whigs themselves, who ever denounced him as a *furious Jacobite*, or *rank Tory*! Speaking of his own eye, of which he had long lost the sight, he frequently said, "the *dog* was never good for any thing"; and for his having neglected the performance of some friendly office for an acquaintance during his own sickness, he excused himself by saying, "Sir! every man's a *scoundrel* in sickness; he only thinks of himself."

In our perusal of the life before us, we have found some typographical errors, which the most sedulous attention to the press cannot preclude; there are two or three of a different kind, which will perhaps fall on the author himself: such as *Appleby* in Leicestershire (p. 57) for *Wem* in Shropshire. Previously to that, (p. 50) it might be asked where Mrs. Johnson lodged, when Johnson and Savage "wandered together whole nights in the street and could not pay for a lodging"? p. 59 and 68, Cronzaz is put for Crousaz; and p. 207, speaking of Johnson being more prone to blame than to commend, when the author says, "through the whole of his *Lives of the Poets*, the desire of praise is almost always overpowered by his disposition to censure," he surely means "the desire *to* praise." These errors are few, and not very important; and we may venture to say, on the whole, that this work, which we have examined with much pleasure, is written with strength, elegance, good taste, and sound judgment. It is to be prefixed to a new edition of Johnson's Lives of the Poets.

SECTION II

THE TOURS TO THE HEBRIDES

By SAMUEL JOHNSON, ESQ., LL.D.
„ JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

REMARKS ON DR. JOHNSON'S BOOK OF THE TOUR

By THE REVD. DONALD M'NICOL, A.M.

II

Jan. 1775 Vol. 52 p. 57[1]

SCOTLAND seems to be daily so much increasing in consideration with her sister-kingdom, that tours to the Highlands, and voyages to the isles, will possibly become the fashionable *routes* of our virtuosi, and those who travel for mere amusement. Mr. Pennant has led the way; Dr. Johnson has followed; and with such precursors, and the sanction of such examples, what man of spirit and curiosity will forbear to explore these remote parts of our island, with her territorial appendages,—of which, indeed, and of the public advantages which *might* be derived from them, we have hitherto been shamefully ignorant.

Dr. Johnson's book may be regarded as a valuable supplement to Mr. Pennant's two accounts of his northern expeditions,—the more *properly* supplemental, as it is a very different performance, on the same subject; both Writers concurring in the general representation, where the track in which they proceed, and the subjects they view, happen to be the same (which is not very frequently the case) and disagreeing in no circumstance of importance.

Mr. Pennant travels, chiefly, in the character of the naturalist and the antiquary; Dr. Johnson in that of the moralist and observer of men and manners. The former describes whatever is remarkable in the face of the country —the extraordinary productions of Nature—the ruins, the relics, and the monuments of past times; the latter gives us his observations on the common appearances and productions of the soil and climate, with the customs and characteristics of the inhabitants, just as particulars

[1] ART. XV. *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.* 8vo. 5*s.* Boards. Cadell. 1775.

and circumstances chanced to present themselves to his notice. The ingenious Cambrian delights in painting sublime scenes, and pleasing pictures; while the learned English Rambler seems rather to confine his views to the naked truth,—to moralize on the occurrences of his journey, and to illustrate the characters and situation of the people whom he visited, by the sagacity of remark, and the profundity of reflection.

None of those who have the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Dr. Johnson, will suppose that he set out with many prejudices in *favour* of that country. With what opinion of it he returned, will be seen from the extracts we shall give from his observations.

He begins with informing us, that he had desired to visit the Hebrides, "so long, says he, that I scarcely remember how the wish was originally excited; and was, in the autumn of the year 1773, induced to undertake the journey, by finding in Mr. Boswell [1] a companion, whose acuteness would help my inquiry, and whose gaiety of conversation and civility of manners are sufficient to counteract the inconveniences of travel, in countries less hospitable than we have passed."

The learned Traveller relates no occurrences of his journey from London to Edinburgh. His itinerary, therefore, commences with his departure from the capital of North Britain; which was on the 18th of August; somewhat too late in the season, surely, for a tour in that country, and a voyage in those seas, in which no man, we believe, ever thought of taking a *journey* of *pleasure* in the *winter*. In this respect Mr. Pennant, the year before, had greatly the advantage of our Author; for he wisely took his departure in the early and delightful month of May; with the reasonable expectation of having only *fair-weather* difficulties to encounter.

Crossing the *Frith* of *Forth*, the curiosity of our Travellers was attracted by *Inch Keith;* a small island, of which, on examination, Dr. Johnson had little to remark, except,

[1] Author of a Tour to Corsica, with Memoirs of Paoli, and other ingenious performances: see Review, vol. xxxix. p. 43.

—in his peculiar manner, —that it was "not wholly bare of grass, and very fertile of thistles."

The first place of note that excited the Doctor's particular attention, was the city and university of St. Andrews; where our Travellers "were gratified by every mode of kindness, and entertained with all the elegance of lettered hospitality." He gives an ample account of this once flourishing archiepiscopal city; pathetically laments its decay; and quits it with a declaration perfectly in character, from a man of our Author's great sensibility, and well known zeal for the honours and interests of religion and learning: "the kindness of the professors, says he, did not contribute to abate the uneasy remembrance of an university declining, a college alienated, and a church profaned [1] and hastening to the ground."

From St. Andrews we attend our Author along a dreary, desart, tree-less and joyless way, through Dundee, to Aberbrothwick; where was a monastery of great renown in the history of Scotland: and "its ruins afford ample testimony of its ancient magnificence." A brief description of them is given, and Dr. Johnson declares, that he should scarcely have regretted his journey, had it afforded nothing more than the sight of Aberbrothwick.

Proceed to Montrose; a well-built town. The English chapel there afforded a twofold curiosity, in Scotland: it was clean, and it had an organ. The Scots, though a very religious people, are said to be remarkably negligent of their churches, in respect to cleanliness: of which even Mr. Pennant, if we rightly remember, has taken notice, notwithstanding his general complaisance to the country.

Arrive at Aberdeen. This flourishing city is described; and in its university our travellers met with the same kind

[1] The *profanation* here alluded to, is that of the chapel of St. Leonard's College. This college (one of *three*, of which the university formerly consisted) is now dissolved by the sale of its buildings and the appropriation of its revenues to the Professors of the two others. The chapel of the alienated college is yet standing, and is converted into a greenhouse. Our Author observes that the plants do not hitherto *prosper*; and we imagine the pious Doctor was at no loss for the *reason*.

and honourable reception as at St. Andrews: Dr. Johnson was honoured with the freedom of the city.

From Aberdeen they proceeded to Slaines-castle, and visited the famous *Bullers* of *Buchan*. This last is a natural curiosity; and is extremely well described by our Author. There is also a description of it in Mr. Pennant's first Tour.

Bamf is next visited; and, in progressive order, Elgin, Fores, Calder, Fort-George, and Inverness. At this last mentioned place, the Author emphatically says, "we were now to bid farewell to the luxury of travelling, (the post-chaise) and to enter a country upon which, perhaps, no wheel has ever rolled."—Here, therefore, they procured horses and guides; and "on the *thirteenth* of August," (misprinted, we suppose, for *thirtieth*,) directed their course toward Fort-Augustus; to which they had a pleasant day's journey, by the side of Loch-Ness: the road fine, and the prospect romantic and delightful.[1] Our Author, in describing this celebrated piece of water, descants on its supposed extraordinary quality, by which it is said to enjoy an exemption from freezing; and, as "natural history is now one of the favourite studies of the Scottish nation," he recommends Loch-Ness to their diligent examination.

Here they met with the first Highland *hut* they had observed; "and as our business, says the Author, was with life and manners, we were willing to visit it." The construction of an hut is thus described:

"A hut is constructed with loose stones, ranged for the most part with some tendency to circularity. It must be placed where the wind cannot act upon it with violence, because it has no cement; and where the water will run easily away, because it has no floor but the naked ground. The wall, which is commonly about six feet high, declines from the perpendicular a little inward. Such rafters as can be procured are then raised for a roof, and covered with heath, which makes a strong and warm thatch,

[1] See a particular description of this noble Lough, and the prospects of the country on both sides of it, copied from Mr. Pennant, in our Review, vol. xlvi. p. 150-151

kept from flying off by ropes of twisted heath, of which the ends, reaching from the center of the thatch to the top of the wall, are held firm by the weight of a large stone. No light is admitted but at the entrance, and through a hole in the thatch, which gives vent to the smoke. This hole is not directly over the fire, lest the rain should extinguish it; and the smoke therefore naturally fills the place before it escapes. Such is the general structure of the houses in which one of the nations of this opulent and powerful island has been hitherto content to live. Huts however are not more uniform than palaces; and this which we were inspecting was very far from one of the meanest, for it was divided into several apartments; and its inhabitants possessed such property as a pastoral poet might exalt into riches.

"When we entered, we found an old woman boiling goats-flesh in a kettle. She spoke little English, but we had interpreters at hand; and she was willing enough to display her whole system of œconomy. She has five children, of which none are yet gone from her. The eldest, a boy of thirteen, and her husband, who is eighty years old, were at work in the wood. Her two next sons were gone to Inverness to buy *meal*, by which oatmeal is always meant. Meal she considered as expensive food, and told us, that in spring, when the goats gave milk, the children could live without it. She is mistress of sixty goats, and I saw many kids in an enclosure at the end of her house. She had also some poultry. By the lake we saw a potatoe-garden, and a small spot of ground on which stood four shucks, containing each twelve sheaves of barley. She has all this from the labour of their own hands, and for what is necessary to be bought, her kids and her chickens are sent to market.

"With the true pastoral hospitality, she asked us to sit down and drink whisky. She is religious, and though the kirk is four miles off, probably eight English miles, she goes thither every Sunday. We gave her a shilling, and she begged snuff; for snuff is the luxury of a Highland cottage."

In another place, in describing the islands, with the

manners and customs of their inhabitants, our Author gives a farther account of the *hut*, as distinguished from the house.

"The habitations of men in the Hebrides may be distinguished into huts and houses. By a *house*, I mean a building with one story over another; by a *hut*, a dwelling with only one floor. The laird, who formerly lived in a castle, now lives in a house; sometimes sufficiently neat, but seldom very spacious or splendid."—"Of the houses little can be said. They are small, and by the necessity of accumulating stores, where there are so few opportunities of purchase, the rooms are very heterogeneously filled. With want of cleanliness it were ingratitude to reproach them. The servants having been bred upon the naked earth, think every floor clean, and the quick succession of guests, perhaps, not always over-elegant, does not allow much time for adjusting their apartments.

"Huts are of many gradations; from murky dens, to commodious dwellings.

"The wall of a common hut is always built without mortar, by a skilful adaptation of loose stones. Sometimes perhaps a double wall of stones is raised, and the intermediate space filled with earth. The air is thus completely excluded. Some walls are, I think, formed of turfs, held together by a wattle, or texture of twigs. Of the meanest huts, the first room is lighted by the entrance, and the second by the smoke-hole. The fire is usually made in the middle. But there are huts, or dwellings, of only one story, inhabited by gentlemen, which have walls cemented with mortar, glass windows, and boarded floors. Of these all have chimneys, and some chimneys have grates.

"The house and the furniture are not always nicely suited. We were driven once, by missing a passage, to the hut of a gentleman, where, after a very liberal supper, when I was conducted to my chamber, I found an elegant bed of Indian cotton, spread with fine sheets. The accommodation was flattering; I undressed myself, and felt my feet in the mire. The bed stood upon the bare

earth, which a long course of rain had softened into a puddle."

From Fort-Augustus they had to cross the Highlands, towards the western coast, and to content themselves with such accommodations as a way so little frequented could afford. The journey, however, did not appear formidable, as they saw it but of two days' continuance—On they passed, "through the dreariness of solitude;" they "were now in the bosom of the Highlands, with full leisure to contemplate the appearance and properties of mountainous regions, such as have been, in many countries, the last shelters of national distress, and are every where the scenes of adventures, stratagems, surprizes, and escapes."—The latter part of this observation is illustrated by a variety of anecdotes scattered through the work, relating to the feuds and contests, the rapine and devastations, which subsisted among the chiefs of the clans, in former times, before the abolition of the heretable jurisdictions, which took place soon after the rebellion in 1745.

Our Author slightly sketches out the *landscape of the desart*; but, though the subject is barren, the touches of the pencil are masterly.

"Of the hills, he says, many may be called with Homer's Ida *abundant in springs*, but few can deserve the epithet which he bestows upon Pelion by *waving their leaves*. They exhibit very little variety; being almost wholly covered with dark heath, and even that seems to be checked in its growth. What is not heath is nakedness, a little diversified by now and then a stream rushing down the steep. An eye accustomed to flowery pastures and waving harvests is astonished and repelled by this wide extent of hopeless sterility. The appearance is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness, dismissed by nature from her care and disinherited of her favours, left in its original elemental state, or quickened only with one sullen power of useless vegetation.

"It will very readily occur, that this uniformity of barrenness can afford very little amusement to the traveller; that it is easy to sit at home and conceive rocks and heath, and waterfalls; and that these journeys

are useless labours, which neither impregnate the imagination, nor enlarge the understanding. It is true that of far the greater part of things, we must content ourselves with such knowledge as description may exhibit, or analogy supply; but it is true likewise, that these ideas are always incomplete, and that at least, till we have compared them with realities, we do not know them to be just. As we see more, we become possessed of more certainties, and consequently gain more principles of reasoning, and found a wider basis of analogy.

"Regions mountainous and wild, thinly inhabited, and little cultivated, make a great part of the earth, and he that has never seen them, must live unacquainted with much of the face of nature, and with one of the great scenes of human existence.

"As the day advanced towards noon, we entered a narrow valley, not very flowery, but sufficiently verdant. Our guides told us, that the horses could not travel all day without rest or meat, and intreated us to stop here, because no grass could be found in any other place. The request was reasonable and the argument cogent. We therefore willingly dismounted and diverted ourselves as the place gave us opportunity.

"I sat down on a bank, such as a writer of romance might have delighted to feign. I had indeed no trees to whisper over my head, but a clear rivulet streamed at my feet. The day was calm, the air soft, and all was rudeness, silence, and solitude. Before me, and on either side, were high hills, which by hindering the eye from ranging, forced the mind to find entertainment for itself. Whether I spent the hour well I know not; for here I first conceived the thought of this narration.

"We were in this place at ease and by choice, and had no evils to suffer or to fear; yet the imaginations excited by the view of an unknown and untravelled wilderness are not such as arise in the artificial solitude of parks and gardens, a flattering notion of self sufficiency, a placid indulgence of voluntary delusions, a secure expansion of the fancy, or a cool concentration of the mental powers. The phantoms that haunt a desart, are want, and misery,

and danger; the evils of dereliction rush upon the thoughts; man is made unwillingly acquainted with his own weakness, and meditation shows him only how little he can sustain, and how little he can perform. There were no traces of inhabitants, except perhaps a rude pile of clods called a summer hut, in which a herdsman had rested in the favourable seasons. Whoever had been in the place where I then sat, unprovided with provisions and ignorant of the country, might, at least before the roads were made, have wandered among the rocks, till he had perished with hardship, before he could have found either food or shelter. Yet what are these hillocks to the ridges of Taurus, or these spots of wildness to the desarts of America? "

In describing the manners of the mountaineers, our Author entertains us with an ample investigation of those peculiarities by which the rugged regions before him are distinguished. He makes a variety of striking remarks on the causes and effects of the former rude and savage state of the Highlanders: and, on these topics, he reasons not only with the liberality of a philosopher, but with the depth of a politician.—By the way, we must observe, that under the denomination of Highlander, he comprehends, throughout his whole book, all Scots who still speak the *Erse* language, or retain the primitive manners, whether they live among the mountains, or in the islands.

After relating many notable instances of the former barbarity of the Highlanders, during that state of vassalage from which they are now so happily freed, Dr. Johnson remarks (as Mr. Pennant had done before) that " perhaps there was never any change of national manners so quick, so great, and so general, as that which has operated in the Highlands by the last conquest, and the subsequent laws."

" We came thither, he continues, too late to see what we expected, a people of peculiar appearance, and a system of antiquated life. The clans retain little now of their original character, their ferocity of temper is softened, their military ardour is extinguished, their dignity of independence is depressed, their contempt of government

subdued, and their reverence for their chiefs abated. Of what they had before the late conquest of their country, there remain only their language and their poverty. Their language is attacked on every side. Schools are erected, in which *English* only is taught, and there were lately some who thought it reasonable to refuse them a version of the holy scriptures, that they might have no monument of their mother tongue.

"That their poverty is gradually abated, cannot be mentioned among the unpleasing consequences of subjection. They are now acquainted with money, and the possibility of gain will by degrees make them industrious."

Proceeding in their journey, by the way of Auknasheals and Glenelg, our Travellers, on the 20th of September, found themselves at the sea side, and were ferried over to the Isle of Sky. They landed at Armidel, the seat of Sir Alexander Macdonald; who received them with that hospitality, and kindness, which, indeed, they every where experienced. Dr. Johnson's description of this island, with the neighbouring one of Raasay, is not the least entertaining part of his journal. The last named island is the property of a Mr. Macleod, at whose house the doctor and his company met with the same welcome reception as at Sky. Part of his account of the manner in which they were here entertained will, we are persuaded, prove no disagreeable entertainment to our readers.

"Our reception, says Dr. Johnson, exceeded our expectations. We found nothing but civility, elegance, and plenty. After the usual refreshments, and the usual conversation, the evening came upon us. The carpet was then rolled off the floor; the musician was called, and the whole company was invited to dance, nor did ever fairies trip with greater alacrity. The general air of festivity, which predominated in this place, so far remote from all those regions which the mind has been used to contemplate as the mansions of pleasure, struck the imagination with a delightful surprise, analogous to that which is felt at an unexpected emersion from darkness into light.

"When it was time to sup, the dance ceased, and six

and thirty persons sat down to two tables in the same room. After supper the ladies sung Erse songs, to which I listened as an English audience to an Italian opera, delighted with the sound of words which I did not understand."

To pass from merriment to a more serious topic, our Author frequently laments the decay of religion in the Hebrides, since the reformation from popery. The churches are every where in ruins, so that, in most of the isles, public worship is rarely performed; and that only in houses capable of containing but a very small congregation. "Through the few islands which we visited, says our Author, we neither saw nor heard of any house of prayer, except in Sky, that was not in ruins. The malignant influence of Calvinism has blasted ceremony and decency together; and if the remembrance of papal superstition is obliterated, the monuments of papal piety are likewise effaced.

"It has been, for many years, popular to talk of the lazy devotion of the Romish clergy; over the sleepy laziness of men that erected churches, we may indulge our superiority with a new triumph, by comparing it with the fervid activity of those who suffer them to fall.

"Of the destruction of churches, the decay of religion must in time be the consequence; for while the public acts of the ministry are now performed in houses, a very small number can be present; and as the greater part of the Islanders make no use of books, all must necessarily live in total ignorance who want the opportunity of vocal instruction."

Although not a friend to the kirk of Scotland, our Author expresses great regard for their ministers, bearing honourable testimony of their learning, piety, and decent deportment, in every part of his book, in which he has occasion to introduce them, which is not seldom. Speaking, in particular, of Mr. Maclean, minister of the Isle of Col, he mentions his great reputation for learning, and his extraordinary venerable appearance,—"excelling, says he, in dignity, what I remember in any other man. His conversation," the doctor adds, "was not unsuitable to his

appearance. I lost some of his good will, by treating a heretical writer with more regard than, in his opinion, a heretic could deserve. I honoured his orthodoxy, and did not much censure his asperity. A man who has settled his opinions, does not love to have the tranquillity of his conviction disturbed; and at seventy-seven it is time to be in earnest."

In another place he says, speaking of the ministers in the islands, "I saw not one whom I had reason to think either deficient in learning, or irregular in life; but found several with whom I could not converse without wishing, as my *respect increased*, that they had not been *Presbyterians*."—Surely, dear Doctor, at an age less than "seventy-seven, it is time to be in earnest"—to get rid of such little prejudices. What would our reflecting Author think, and what would he not have said, of Mr. Maclean, had that reverend divine manifested a similar concern at finding Dr. Johnson a rigid episcopalian?

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"All travel," says our reflecting and philosophizing Rambler, "has its advantages. If the passenger visits better countries, he may learn to improve his own, and if fortune carries him to worse, he may learn to enjoy it." One of these advantages may, indeed, be most comfortably drawn from this survey of a cluster of islands, of which it is confessed, "that they have not many allurements, but to the mere lover of *naked nature*." For, "the inhabitants are thin, provisions are scarce, and desolation and penury give little pleasure."

As the enjoyment of this satisfaction may, however, (to the *national* English Reader) be mingled with some degree of malignant exultation, we do not, at present, feel so much desire to gratify him, as to pass on, directly, to matters of higher curiosity.—Besides, with regard to those circumstances of description, which chiefly serve but to mark the natural disparity between the southern and northern parts of our island, enough of them are to be found in the former part of this article.

The public attention hath been much excited by the altercations to which this work hath given birth, con-

cerning the *Earse* language, and our Author's opinions as to the originality and authenticity of *Ossian's* Poems, as published by the ingenious Mr. Macpherson. We shall therefore preextract what the learned traveller has inserted, on that subject, in the work before us.

The doctor premises an acknowledgment that as he understands nothing of the *Earse*, he cannot say more of it than he has *been told*. On this foundation, he ventures to pronounce it " the rude speech of a barbarous people, who had few thoughts to express, and were content, as they conceived grossly, to be grossly understood." He proceeds :

" After what has lately been talked of Highland Bards, and Highland genius, many will startle when they are told, that the *Earse* never was a written language ; that there is not in the world an *Earse* manuscript a hundred years old ; and that the sounds of the Highlanders were never expressed by letters, till some little books of piety were translated, and a metrical version of the Psalms was made by the Synod of *Argyle*. Whoever therefore now writes in this language, spells according to his own perception of the sound, and his own idea of the power of the letters. The *Welsh* and the *Irish* are cultivated tongues. The Welsh, two hundred years ago, insulted their *English* neighbours for the instability of their Orthography ; while the *Earse* merely floated in the breath of the people, and could therefore receive little improvement.

" When a language begins to teem with books, it is tending to refinement ; as those who undertake to teach others must have undergone some labour in improving themselves, they set a proportionate value on their own thoughts, and wish to enforce them by efficacious expressions ; speech becomes embodied and permanent ; different modes and phrases are compared, and the best obtains an establishment. By degrees one age improves upon another. Exactness is first obtained, and afterwards elegance. But diction, merely vocal, is always in its childhood. As no man leaves his eloquence behind him, the new generations have all to learn. There may

possibly be books without a polished language, but there can be no polished language without books.

"That the Bards could not read more than the rest of their countrymen, it is reasonable to suppose; because, if they had read, they could probably have written; and how high their compositions may reasonably be rated, an inquirer may best judge by considering what stores of imagery, what principles of ratiocination, what comprehension of knowledge, and what delicacy of elocution he has known any man attain who cannot read. The state of the Bards was yet more hopeless. He that cannot read, may now converse with those that can; but the Bard was a barbarian among barbarians, who, knowing nothing himself, lived with others that knew no more.

"There has lately been in the Islands one of these illiterate poets, who hearing the Bible read at church, is said to have turned the sacred history into verse. I heard part of a dialogue, composed by him, translated by a young lady in *Mull*, and thought it had more meaning than I expected from a man totally uneducated; but he had some opportunities of knowledge; he lived among a learned people. After all that has been done for the instruction of the Highlanders, the antipathy between their language and literature still continues; and no man that has learned only *Earse* is, at this time, able to read.

"The *Earse* has many dialects, and the words used in some Islands are not always known in others. In literate nations, though the pronunciation, and sometimes the words of common speech may differ, as now in *England*, compared with the South of *Scotland*, yet there is a written diction, which pervades all dialects, and is understood in every province. But where the whole language is colloquial, he that has only one part, never gets the rest, as he cannot get it but by change of residence.

"In an unwritten speech, nothing that is not very short is transmitted from one generation to another. Few have opportunities of hearing a long composition often enough to learn it; or have inclination to repeat it, so often as is necessary to retain it; and what is once forgotten is lost for ever. I believe there cannot be recovered, in the

whole *Earse* language, five hundred lines of which there is any evidence to prove them a hundred years old. Yet I hear that the father of Ossian boasts of two chests more of ancient poetry, which he suppresses, because they are too good for the *English*.

" He that goes into the Highlands with a mind naturally acquiescent, and a credulity eager for wonders, may come back with an opinion very different from mine; for the inhabitants knowing the ignorance of all strangers in their language and antiquities, perhaps are not very scrupulous adherents to truth ; yet I do not say that they deliberately speak studied falsehood, or have a settled purpose to deceive. They have inquired and considered little, and do not always feel their own ignorance. They are not much accustomed to be interrogated by others ; and seem never to have thought upon interrogating themselves ; so that if they do not know what they tell to be true, they likewise do not distinctly perceive it to be false.

" Mr. Boswell was very diligent in his inquiries ; and the result of his investigations was, that the answer to the second question was commonly such as nullified the answer to the first.

" We were a while told, that they had an old translation of the scriptures ; and told it till it would appear obstinacy to inquire again. Yet by continued accumulation of questions we found, that the translation meant, if any meaning there were, was nothing else than the *Irish* Bible.

" We heard of manuscripts that were, or that had been in the hands of somebody's father, or grandfather ; but at last we had no reason to believe they were other than Irish. Martin mentions Irish, but never any Earse manuscripts, to be found in the Islands in his time.

" I suppose my opinion of the poems of Ossian is already discovered. I believe they never existed in any other form than that which we have seen. The editor, or author, never could shew the original ; nor can it be shewn by any other. To revenge reasonable incredulity, by refusing evidence, is a degree of insolence, with which the world is not yet acquainted ; and stubborn audacity

is the last refuge of guilt. It would be easy to shew it if he had it; but whence could it be had. It is too long to be remembered, and the language formerly had nothing written. He has doubtless inserted names that circulate in popular stories, and may have translated some wandering ballads, if any can be found; and the names, and some of the images being recollected, make an inaccurate auditor imagine, by the help of Caledonian bigotry, that he has formerly heard the whole.

"I asked a very learned Minister in Sky, who had used all arts to make me believe the genuineness of the book, whether at last he believed it himself? but he would not answer. He wished me to be deceived, for the honour of his country; but would not directly and formally deceive me. Yet has this man's testimony been publickly produced, as of one that held Fingal to be the work of Ossian.

"It is said, that some men of integrity profess to have heard parts of it, but they all heard them when they were boys; and it was never said that any of them could recite six lines. They remember names, and perhaps some proverbial sentiments; and, having no distinct ideas, coin a resemblance without an original. The persuasion of the Scots, however, is far from universal; and in a question so capable of proof, why should doubt be suffered to continue? The editor has been heard to say, that part of the poem was received by him, in the Saxon character. He has then found, by some peculiar fortune, an unwritten language, written in a character which the natives probably never beheld.

"I have yet supposed no imposture but in the publisher, yet I am far from certainty that some translations have not been lately made, that may now be obtruded as parts of the original work. Credulity on one part is a strong temptation to deceit on the other, especially to deceit of which no personal injury is the consequence, and which flatters the author with his own ingenuity. The Scots have something to plead for their easy reception of an improbable fiction: they are seduced by their fondness for their supposed ancestors. A Scotchman must be a very sturdy

moralist, who does not love *Scotland* better than truth: he will always love it better than inquiry; and if falsehood flatters his vanity, will not be very diligent to detect it. Neither ought the *English* to be much influenced by *Scotch* authority; for of the past and present state of the whole *Earse* nation, the Lowlanders are at least as ignorant as ourselves."

Such is the opinion, and such are the reasonings of our learned Author, in relation to the *northern Homer* and his supposed writings. To these arguments, nothing hath been opposed, by the champions for Ossian, but railing and ridicule, in the news-papers; together with an Advertisement from Mr. Becket, the Bookseller, declaring that the original was publickly exposed, during several months, at his shop, for the examination of the curious. But still it does not appear in what language that same *original* was written; and our honest publisher hath, since, modestly declined his part in the controversy: it is even said that, in private, among his friends, he makes no scruple of acknowledging that he is no better acquainted with the *Earse*, than Dr. Johnson himself.

The appearance of an *inclination* in our Author to believe in the *second sight*, (the notion of which hath so long, and so seriously obtained in the Highlands and the Isles) hath given rise to some pleasantry at the Doctor's expense. He does not, however, profess his entire faith in this species of prophecy. He declares that, on a strict inquiry into the subject, he never could "advance his curiosity to conviction." But he acknowledges that he "came away at last, only willing to believe."—This will, no doubt, extort a smile even from the gravest of our Readers; but all who have perused the Doctor's book must allow that he seems to have made the most, and the best, that could be made, of so very singular an investigation: and that he hath thrown out some observations on the subject, which only a man of genius could have offered. And the most infidel reader must subscribe to the justice of the Doctor's remark, that he, and his companion,[1] would have had but "little claim to the praise

[1] Mr. Boswell.

of curiosity if they had not endeavoured, with particular attention, to examine the question of the *second sight.*" He adds, " Of an opinion received for centuries by a whole nation, and supposed to be confirmed through its whole descent, by a series of successive facts, it is desirable that the truth should be established, or the fallacy detected."

The Doctor's remark, and intention, are equally entitled to our approbation; but the misfortune is, that, still, with regard to this question, there is no *truth established,* nor *fallacy detected.*

We must now, for the present, take leave of this very able and entertaining writer; but not without expressing our thanks for the pleasure we have received in the perusal of his animated and instructive narration.

As to any little defects that may possibly be espied in this work, by the microscopic eye of a minute critic, we have not, at this time, either leisure or inclination to engage in the search of them.—Indeed, the modesty, and dignity of simplicity, with which this philosophic traveller concludes his volume, are sufficient to turn the edge of all true and liberal criticism.

" Such, says he, are the things which this journey has given me an opportunity of seeing, and such are the reflections which that sight has raised. Having passed my time almost wholly in cities, I may have been surprised by modes of life and appearances of nature, that are familiar to men of wider survey and more varied conversation. Novelty and ignorance must always be reciprocal, and I cannot but be conscious that my thoughts on national manners, are the thoughts of one who has seen but little."

April 1786 Vol. 74 p. 277 [1]

The general maxim, that trifles become of serious consequence when connected with men of illustrious

[1] Art. VII. *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,* with Samuel Johnson, LL.D. By James Boswell, Esq. Containing some poetical Pieces by Dr. Johnson, relative to the Tour, and never before published; a Series of his Conversation, literary Anecdotes, and Opinions of Men and Books: with an authentic Account of the Distresses and Escape of the Grandson of King James II. in the Year 1746. The Second Edition revised and corrected. 8vo. 6*s.* Boards. Dilly. 1785.

names, is very often carried too far by their partial admirers; but when a great man is exhibited in those moments in which he forgets his dignity, we rather blame the historian who records his weakness, than the hero, who in common life is no more than a common man. If, however, the hero is pleased to see himself reduced to the level of frail mortality, who will then find fault with the historian? If Dr. Johnson was satisfied to have the foolish speeches he made, and the perverse things he did, recorded with fidelity;—if on reviewing them, he pronounced them to be faithful representations of his principles, his manners, and his conversation, who will blame Mr. Boswell? [1]

Dr. Johnson carried the *quidlibet audendi* into the habits of common life: he looked upon himself as a privileged being: and wherever we find him (especially in Scotland, and with Scotch Professors), he reminds us of a certain exulting speech, that is recorded by an ancient writer, of some who appeared to have been created to scorn all the rest of mankind—"With our TONGUES we will prevail, our lips are our own, and who is Lord over us?"

A terrific and overbearing haughtiness was a prominent feature in Dr. Johnson's character. His tone of voice—the pompous rowl of his language, and his fierce and uncouth visage, had a repelling quality, which few had the resolution or presence of mind to withstand. He *petrified* a man of common modesty; and his "No, *Sir!*"—though it might not convince, was almost sure to confound, and to silence.

His stern (we cannot call it dignified) haughtiness, was frequently the cover for a more despicable vanity, which he was prudent enough to discover only to those who were honoured with his more familiar confidence. One instance, out of many, we will particularly mention.—When Mr. Boswell remarked to Dr. Johnson, that some eminent persons of Scotland were silent in his company

[1] Dr. Johnson perused this journal at the time when Mr. Boswell was penning it, expressed his approbation of it in such language as flattered Mr. B.'s vanity, and exposed his own weakness.

the evening before ; he replied, " that they had a character to preserve in their own country ; and they were prudent in not running the risque of being exposed by talking much before him."

A striking instance of his disputatious humour occurred at Lord Monboddo's, and serves, instead of a thousand, to mark this distinguished trait of his character :

" He was much pleased with Lord Monboddo to-day. He said, he would have pardoned him for a few paradoxes, when he found he had so much that was good : but that, from his appearance in London, he thought him all paradox ; which would not do.—He observed, that his Lordship had talked no paradoxes to-day. ' And as to the savage and the London shopkeeper, (said he) I don't know but I might have taken the side of the savage equally, had any body else taken the side of the shopkeeper.' "

But, though Mr. Boswell hath faithfully recorded all Dr. Johnson's imperfections—his dogmatism, his bigotry, his rudeness, his wayward and his childish humours ;—yet in the picture which he hath delineated, we discern the features of an acute and comprehensive mind, an ardent and a vigorous imagination ; and are frequently delighted by the lively sallies of his wit, and instructed by his judicious and excellent remarks on the various subjects of art and learning, men and manners, politics, religion and morals.

Much we may question, and much we may condemn. But the work before us is not of such a nature as to require a minute and critical examination : and if we began to select false and erroneous maxims, or hasty and bigoted reflections, for animadversion and confutation, we should not know where to make an end.

We will particularly select, out of this copious mass of *memorabilia*, the well-written, and, we believe, very accurate description of Dr. Johnson's person and character ; and to it we will add one or two specimens of that acuteness and dexterity in conversation, for which he became equally conspicuous and formidable.

" Dr. Samuel Johnson's character, religious, moral,

political, and literary, nay his figure and manner, are, I believe, more generally known than those of almost any man; yet it may not be superfluous here to attempt a sketch of him. Let my readers then remember that he was a sincere and zealous Christian, of high-church of England and monarchical principles, which he would not tamely suffer to be questioned; steady and inflexible in maintaining the obligations of piety and virtue, both from a regard to the order of society, and from a veneration for the Great Source of all order: correct, nay stern in his taste; hard to please, and easily offended; impetuous and irritable in his temper, but of a most humane and benevolent heart; having a mind stored with a vast and various collection of learning and knowledge, which he communicated with peculiar perspicuity and force, in rich and choice expression. He united a most logical head with a most fertile imagination, which gave him an extraordinary advantage in arguing; for he could reason close or wide, as he saw best for the moment. He could, when he chose it, be the greatest sophist that ever wielded a weapon in the schools of declamation; but he indulged this only in conversation; for he owned he sometimes talked for victory; he was too conscientious to make error permanent and pernicious, by deliberately writing it. He was conscious of his superiority. He loved praise when it was brought to him; but was too proud to seek for it. He was sometimes susceptible of flattery. His mind was so full of imagery, that he might have been perpetually a poet. It has been often remarked, that in his poetical pieces, which it is to be regretted are so few, because so excellent, his style is easier than in his prose. There is deception in this: it is not easier, but better suited to the dignity of verse; as one may dance with grace, whose motions, in ordinary walking,—in the common step, are awkward. He had a constitutional melancholy, the clouds of which darkened the brightness of his fancy, and gave a gloomy cast to his whole course of thinking: yet, though grave and awful in his deportment, when he thought it necessary or proper,—he frequently indulged himself in pleasantry and sportive

sallies. He was prone to superstition, but not to credulity. Though his imagination might incline him to a belief of the marvellous, and the mysterious, his vigorous reason examined the evidence with jealousy. He had a loud voice, and a slow deliberate utterance, which no doubt gave some additional weight to the sterling metal of his conversation. Lord Pembroke said once to me at Wilton, with a happy pleasantry, and some truth, that 'Dr. Johnson's sayings would not appear so extraordinary, were it not for his *bow-wow way*': but I admit the truth of this only on some occasions. The *Messiah*, played upon the *Canterbury organ*, is more sublime than when played upon an inferior instrument: but very slight music will seem grand, when conveyed to the ear through that majestic medium. *While therefore Dr. Johnson's sayings are read, let his manner be taken along with them.* Let it however be observed, that the sayings themselves are generally great; that, though he might be an ordinary composer at times, he was for the most part a Handel.—His person was large, robust, I may say approaching to the gigantic, and grown unwieldy from corpulency. His countenance was naturally of the cast of an ancient statue, but somewhat disfigured by the scars of that *evil*, which, it was formerly imagined, the *royal touch* could cure. He was now in his sixty-fourth year, and was become a little dull of hearing. His sight had always been somewhat weak; yet, so much does mind govern, and even supply the deficiency of organs, that his perceptions were uncommonly quick and accurate. His head, and sometimes also his body, shook with a kind of motion like the effect of a palsy: he appeared to be frequently disturbed by cramps, or convulsive contractions,[1] of the nature of that distemper called *St. Vitus'* dance. He wore a full suit of

[1] "Such they appeared to me; but since the former edition, Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed to me, 'that Dr. Johnson's extraordinary gestures were only habits, in which he indulged himself at certain times. When in company where he was not free, or when engaged earnestly in conversation, he never gave way to such habits, which proves that they were not involuntary.' I still however think, that these gestures were involuntary; for surely had not that been the case, he would have restrained them in the public streets."

plain brown clothes, with twisted hair buttons of the same colour, a large bushy greyish wig, a plain shirt, black worsted stockings, and silver buckles. Upon this tour, when journeying, he wore boots, and a very wide brown cloth great coat, with pockets which might have almost held the two volumes of his folio Dictionary; and he carried in his hand a large English oak stick. Let me not be censured for mentioning such minute particulars. Every thing relative to so great a man is worth observing. I remember Dr. Adam Smith, in his rhetorical lectures at Glasgow, told us he was glad to know that Milton wore latchets in his shoes, instead of buckles. When I mention the oak stick, it is but letting *Hercules* have his club; and, by-and-by, my readers will find this stick will bud, and produce a good joke.

"This imperfect sketch of 'the COMBINATION and the *form*' of that Wonderful Man, whom I venerated and loved while in this world, and after whom I gaze with humble hope, now that it has pleased ALMIGHTY GOD to call him to a better world, will serve to introduce to the fancy of my readers the capital object of the following journal, in the course of which I trust they will attain to a considerable degree of acquaintance with him.

"His prejudice against Scotland was announced almost as soon as he began to appear in the world of letters. In his *London*, a poem, are the following nervous lines:

> "For who would leave, unbrib'd, Hibernia's land?
> Or change the rocks of Scotland for the Strand?
> There none are swept by sudden fate away;
> But all, whom hunger spares, with age decay."

"The truth is, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, he allowed himself to look upon all nations but his own as barbarians: not only Hibernia, and Scotland, but Spain, Italy, and France, are attacked in the same poem. If he was particularly prejudiced against the Scots, it was because they were more in his way; because he thought their success in England rather exceeded the due proportion of their real merit; and because he could not but see in them that nationality which I believe no liberal-minded

Scotsman will deny. He was indeed, if I may be allowed the phrase, at bottom much of a *John Bull;* much of a blunt *true-born Englishman.* There was a stratum of common clay under the rock of marble. He was voraciously fond of good eating; and he had a great deal of that quality called *humour*, which gives an oiliness and a gloss to every other quality."

The Doctor's conversation through the several stages of his tour, is here retailed with wonderful accuracy and minuteness. It is a true picture of the man and his manners: and we constantly perceive in it something to entertain, and something to offend.

"At supper we had Dr. Cullen, his son the advocate, Dr. Adam Fergusson, and Mr. Crosbie, advocate. Witchcraft was introduced. Mr. Crosbie said, he thought it the greatest blasphemy to suppose evil spirits counteracting the Deity, and raising storms, for instance, to destroy his creatures.—*Johnson.* 'Why, Sir, if moral evil be consistent with the government of the Deity, why may not physical evil be also consistent with it? It is not more strange that there should be evil spirits, than evil men: evil unembodied spirits, than evil embodied spirits. And as to storms, we know there are such things; and it is no worse that evil spirits raise them, than that they rise.'—*Crosbie.* 'But it is not credible, that witches should have effected what they are said in stories to have done.'—*Johnson.* 'Sir, I am not defending their credibility. I am only saying, that your arguments are not good, and will not overturn the belief of witchcraft.—(Dr. Fergusson said to me, aside, 'He is right.')—And then, Sir, you have all mankind, rude and civilized, agreeing in the belief of the agency of preternatural powers. You must take evidence: you must consider, that wise and great men have condemned witches to die.'—*Crosbie.* 'But an act of parliament put an end to witchcraft.'—*Johnson.* 'No, Sir; witchcraft had ceased; and therefore an act of parliament was passed to prevent persecution for what was not witchcraft. Why it ceased, we cannot tell, as we cannot tell the reason of many other things.'"

Dr. Johnson's orthodoxy kept pace with his Toryism.

Whether Mr. Boswell hath exactly stated the Doctor's ideas of the Atonement, we are not certain. The terms employed are evidently those of a man who never studied the subject. But to whose account we must place the confusion, it is not our business to determine.

"I spoke of the satisfaction of Christ. He said his notion was, that it did not atone for the sins of the world; but, by satisfying divine justice, by shewing that no less than the Son of God suffered for sin, it shewed to men, and innumerable created beings, the heinousness of it, and therefore rendered it unnecessary for divine vengeance to be exercised against sinners, as it otherwise must have been; that in this way it might operate even in favour of those who had never heard of it: as to those who did hear of it, the effect it should produce would be repentance and piety, by impressing upon the mind a just notion of sin: that original sin was the propensity to evil, which no doubt was occasioned by the fall. He presented this solemn subject in a new light to me,[1] and rendered much more rational and clear the doctrine of what our Saviour had done for us;—as it removed the notion of imputed righteousness in co-operating; whereas by this view, Christ has done all already that he had to do, or is ever to do, for mankind, by making his great satisfaction; the consequences of which will affect each individual according to the particular conduct of each. I would illustrate this by saying, that Christ's satisfaction resembles a sun placed to shew light to men, so that it depends upon themselves whether they will walk the right way or not, which they could not have done without that sun, '*the sun of righteousness.*' There is, however, more in it than merely giving light,—*a light to lighten the Gentiles:* for we are told, there is *healing under his wings.* Dr. Johnson said to me, 'Richard Baxter commends a treatise by Grotius, *De Satisfactione Christi.* I have never read it: but I intend to read it; and you may read it.' I

[1] "My worthy, intelligent, and candid friend, Dr. Kippis, informs me, that several divines have thus explained the mediation of our Saviour. What Dr. Johnson now delivered, was but a temporary opinion; for he afterwards was fully convinced of the *propitiatory sacrifice*, as I shall shew at large in my future work, THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D."

remarked, upon the principle now laid down, we might explain the difficult and seemingly hard text, 'They that believe shall be saved; and they that believe not shall be damned': They that believe shall have such an impression made upon their minds, as will make them act so that they may be accepted by God."

On the whole this publication hath afforded us much entertainment; and we expect to have it considerably increased by the Life of Dr. Johnson, now preparing for the press, by the hand which hath recorded this *Journal of his Tour*, and which is so well qualified to do it justice.

We wish him to copy the example of Plutarch, who, though he followed his heroes to the recesses of private life, and exhibited them in the hours of social ease, yet generally left in the shade what tended to diminish their greatness, or sully their virtues.

Oct. 1780 Vol. 63 p. 258[1]

In the present performance, our *young* Author hath attacked a most respectable veteran in literature with much ill-nature, and with a degree of petulance still more intolerable and disgusting than his acrimony. He hath anxiously sought for imperfections in a work where perfection was not attainable. He hath magnified errors and mistakes, which a candid mind would scarcely have perceived; or, if it had perceived, would readily have excused them. But, as it generally happens when prejudice hath vitiated the judgment, Mr. M'Nicol hath not only made the most of venial mistakes, but he pretends to have discovered them where they do not exist. It is therefore not at all to be wondered at, that this work should have swelled to its present size, or that its Author, proud of holding a competition with Dr. Johnson, without a view of pecuniary advantage, or even literary fame (objects above his humility, or beneath his pride!) should advance to the charge with all the fancied importance of a formidable antagonist.

[1] Art. III. *Remarks on Dr. Samuel Johnson's Journey to the Hebrides*; in which are contained, Observations on the Antiquities, Language, Genius and Manners of the Highlanders of Scotland. By the Rev. Donald M'Nicol, A.M. Minister of Lismore, Argyleshire. 8vo. 4*s*. Boards. Cadell. 1780.

Impartiality, however, obliges us to acknowledge, that Dr. Johnson is reprehensible for many passages in his work, which savour more of the illiberal partiality of the intolerant churchman, than the freedom and candour of a wise and unbiassed philosopher. In our Review of the "Journey to the Western Islands," we noted with dislike some ill-natured reflections on the ecclesiastical establishment of Scotland: though (as friends to the *universal* interests of religion) we were pleased to find, that even the Doctor's critical—or, as some would call it—"jaundiced eye" could discover but *one* striking blemish in the character of its ministers: and that the very blemish which so much offended him lay more *in the optic seeing than in the object seen.*—They were Presbyterians!

Nevertheless, we are by no means disposed to join with Mr. M'Nicol in ascribing the errors of Dr. Johnson's Work to a spirit of wilful misrepresentation or malignant revenge; nor are we ready to put down the Doctor's aversion to the sacrilegious ravages of Knox's reformation, to his predilection for the superstitions of Popery: neither can we give any credit to Mr. M'Nicol's assertion—that the Doctor visited Scotland with a predetermined resolution to abuse the country, and depreciate Highland traditions, in order to gratify his contempt or his resentment. These are charges of a very serious nature; and we should not be forward to admit them, even if they were supported by more plausible evidences than this writer hath produced. It is not at all surprising, that a man who hath a favourite system should be peculiarly attentive to those circumstances which tend to confirm it, or that any incidental observations should lead more directly to this point; but it is uncandid to ascribe this effect to a settled design, which (as to the *main* object of it) might have been easily accomplished without the expence and fatigue of a journey through the rueful and howling deserts of Scotland. We may see, from a late publication, respecting the character of King Charles I. that such purposes may be answered with great facility; and that any individual or nation may be covered with a double portion of infamy by a malignant recluse, at

a small, a very small expence either of application or ingenuity.

If Mr. M'Nicol had not been as strongly biassed by prejudice, as he would represent Dr. Johnson to have been in almost every reflection which either his wit or his ill nature have thrown on poor Scotland, he would not have been so much enflamed by some very innocent and unimportant observations. He would not have contended with so much sturdiness and zeal for the honour of Scotland in one of the lowest articles of diet. He would have allowed, that *kail* might have been unknown in Scotland before the days of Cromwell:—but Dr. Johnson had unfortunately said, that Cromwell *conquered Scotland!* This reflection touched the pride of our Scotchman; and he was determined, not only to rob the Usurper of the glory of a conquest, but even to deny him the little praise of adding to the scanty stock of Caledonian vegetables. He might also have acknowledged (for it is strictly true, that many of the inhabitants, even of the metropolis of Scotland, have not afforded themselves pullies for their sash-windows. But, unfortunately again, Dr. Johnson is supposed by his testy Remarker to have taken notice of this defect only for the sake of exposing the slovenliness of the Scots. Now as pullies and sash-windows are imagined to be proofs of elegance and convenience, Mr. M'Nicol was resolved that England should not run away with the honour of their introduction: and with the same laudable zeal for his country, he contends strongly that Scotland was *beforehand* with England in almost every article, not only of convenience, but of luxury too!

Such trifles as these (and the book before us abounds with them) have made Dr. Johnson's mistakes appear fewer, and of less consequence than they really are. A more ingenious antagonist would have had a greater advantage over the Doctor, and, if the honour of Scotland had been the capital object, he would have gained his end more effectually by his candour and moderation. The disposition which Mr. M'Nicol displays in almost every page of his book, reminds us of a scheme of characterising

the several nations of Europe in the form of a Newspaper, containing accounts from every capital. The following from Edinburgh is truly expressive of that spirit which dictated four-fifths of the Remarks we are now reviewing, viz. "We are informed from the best authority, that Duncan M'Gregor, lately executed in the grass-market for house-breaking, was *not* a *Scotchman*."

We never considered Dr. Johnson's work as an attempt to give a perfect idea of Scotland: but only to convey the several remarks which were suggested by the objects he surveyed. We were well aware, that from a cynical philosopher we could expect little of that urbanity which is the inseparable companion of an amiable disposition and of polished manners: and from a man who had hitherto been only a speculative *Rambler*, we could form no great hopes of a work entirely free from misrepresentation and partiality. But it is highly petulant and presuming to charge him with unjust and ungenerous *designs*: it is illiberal to reproach him for not taking an account of trees in a country where we are well assured he saw none: and for not describing columns, ruins, and houses, which he had no opportunity of examining.

This Remarker gives us a very unfavourable idea of his own candour, in the beginning of his book, where he brings a charge against Dr. Johnson for commencing his journey to Scotland on the 18th of August. This the Remarker would represent as a season too late for the valetudinarian to expect any amendment of his health, or the traveller to see objects in the fairest view. Those, however, who are acquainted with Scotland well know, that easterly winds and rain are very common in the earlier part of summer, and that little good weather can be depended on till August. No one who knows the country will join with Mr. M'Nicol in his criticism, or when they observe that Dr. Johnson hath remarked, that in many places the corn was not carried in even at the late season when he passed through Scotland.

The appearance of the country must be allowed by all impartial travellers to be in general poor, and to indicate

the want of cultivation. Inclosures and plantations there are; but they are so rare, as to be scarcely an exception to the universal barrenness of the country, especially the Highlands. The inns, even of the metropolis, are well known to be bad; and the accommodations in other places are much more wretched than what we meet with in the common villages in England. These are facts which the partiality of a *thorough* Scotchman may palliate and gloss over, but he cannot deny—unless he be the very opposite of a *sturdy moralist.* Instances of particular plenty and hospitality will not overthrow these general observations.

Dr. Johnson had observed, that the roads in Scotland were little frequented, even near the capital; and his Remarker triumphs in finding, just after, that he arrived at St. Andrews at two in the morning, at which time this captious writer imagines any English roads would have been equally deserted. But he triumphs without a victory; for as the Doctor must have spent nearly the whole day in his journey, he must have been acquainted with the roads near the capital, to which he chiefly confined his observation.

Mr. M'Nicol is never so happy as when he thinks he hath caught Dr. Johnson stumbling on a contradiction. He is sure to make the most of it: and on so promising an occasion he makes the most of his wit too. "In page 3d (says this Remarker) his (Dr. Johnson's) account of the *island* of *Inch Keith* is trifling and contradictory. He represents it as a barren rock, where there formerly was a fort; and yet he tells us again, that it never was intended for a place of strength, and that 'a herd of cows grazes annually upon it in summer.' But a *fort* without *strength* is surely something *new*; and grazing for cattle a most *uncommon mark* of barrenness." This remark is equally ill-natured and trifling. There are in Scotland many forts (barring the Latin derivation of the word) without strength; and we have often seen cattle grazing on spots which an *Englishman* might well call barren; and would wonder how they could be supported there. But we are weary of such quibbling criticisms; and there-

fore haste to select a few of his more laboured defences, where the subject is more generally interesting.

Dr. Johnson had dared, in his usual unqualified style, and without asking any Scotchman's permission, to assert (page 57 of the Journey to the Western Isles), that "the Scots must be forever content to owe to the English all their elegance and culture." On an assertion so peremptory, and so mortifying to Scottish pride, Mr. M'Nicol hath thought proper to remark as follows:

"Had the Doctor been here giving an account of any other nation in Europe, I make no doubt but he would likewise have found some opportunity of making a similar claim in favour of *Old England*. Our good neighbours have been always pretty remarkable for the *modest* virtue of self-applause; and considering their own country, at all times, and in all things, as the true standard of perfection.

"What has been already said concerning *our* early connection with France, may be a sufficient answer to the *absurdity* and *arrogance* of this assertion. It is with an ill grace, indeed, that the English pretend to be a model of taste for others. They themselves are daily copying from the *Gallic* school: and though they have been long under tutorage, the world have not yet conceived any high opinion of their *elegance and culture*. In spite of discipline, there is still a roughness in their manners which has rendered them proverbial.

"But the frequent repetition of the above remark, to be found in the Doctor's performance, renders it necessary to have recourse to a few facts for setting that matter in a proper light; and therefore must recal his attention to some circumstances relating to the state of the two kingdoms long before any friendly intercourse between them could give us an opportunity of receiving those boasted improvements.

"In the year 1234, straw was used for the King's bed in England. In 1300, wine was sold in England only by apothecaries as a cordial. But it was then quite otherwise in Scotland, because of our extensive trade, in proportion to the commerce of those days, with France

and Spain; and till I adverted to this circumstance, it often surprised me to find frequent mention made, in many of our ancient *Gallic* poems, of the drinking of wine and burning of wax in the habitations of our chieftains. In 1340, the parliamentary grants to the King of England were only in kind; and 30,000 sacks of wool was this year's grant. In 1505, the first shilling was coined in England. In 1561, Queen Elizabeth wore the first pair of *knitted* silk stockings that ever were in that country. In 1543, pins were first made in England, and before that time the ladies wore *skewers*.

"To all this let me oppose, but particularly to the *skewers* of the English ladies, the account which the Bishop of Ross gives of the dress of the women amongst the ancient Scots. We shall find, that 'they were clothed with *purple* and *embroidery* of most exquisite workmanship with bracelets and necklaces on their arms and necks, so as to make a most graceful appearance.' Nor needs it be a matter of surprise, how the Scots had opportunities of procuring such ornaments, since the same Author shews they had, at that time, a considerable trade with France and Spain from Inverlochay, near Fort William.—

"But notwithstanding all that can be said to the contrary, the Doctor seems determined, right or wrong, to maintain his position. He therefore goes on, and tells us again, very roundly, that 'till the Union made the Scots acquainted with English manners, their tables were coarse as the feasts of Eskimaux, and their houses filthy as the cottages of Hottentots.'—There is an expression among the lawyers, that *what proves too much, proves nothing.* It is just so with my *worthy friend* the Doctor in this place: he hath laid on his *filth* so very thick, that I am of opinion it will fall off by its own weight.

"But, in the name of wonder, who could have expected such a remark to drop from the pen of a man on whom the witty Lord Chesterfield, many years ago, bestowed the appellation of *Hottentot?* His Lordship was allowed not only to be a good judge of character, but likewise to have had a good hand at drawing a *likeness.* It was therefore unlucky in our Author to come blundering out with an

expression which must call to our remembrance this striking specimen of the noble artist's skill. But I will be bold to affirm, that no man has ever yet seen Dr. Johnson in the act of *feeding*, or beheld the inside of his *cell* in *Fleet-street*, but would think *the feasts of Eskimaux*, or *the cottages of Hottentots*, injured by a comparison."

Mr. M'Nicol may, if he pleases, consider this as an excellent stroke of wit and raillery, and enjoy it in the full measure of self-complacency. We envy him not his entertainment, nor are we disposed to share with him in the pleasure of it.

But Mr. M'Nicol's humour is only a transient and sudden flash. It is soon lost in the more terrible flame of his indignation. The broad sword shoots a gleam of horror athwart the gloomy waste, and all the axes of Lochaber rush on our sight. Mercy on us !

" If this *solemn* pedant (says Mr. M'Nicol) will deign to look back, he will find many things in the history of his own country which ought to convince him, that civilization did not begin very early there, nor advance with a very quick pace. I am always sorry when I am *obliged* to trace out anecdotes of this kind ; but his ill manners and want of candour render it necessary."

O ! what hath Dr. Johnson to answer for ! If it had not been for his *ill manners*, the *ignorance* and *barbarity* of our country would not have been exposed ; nor would modesty itself have been so cruelly put to the blush, as it was, when the delicate hand of Mr. M'Nicol was *compelled* to the task of uncovering the nakedness of the land !

" Alfred the Great, who died in the year 900, complained, that from the Humber to the Thames there was not a priest that understood the Liturgy in his mother-tongue : and that from the Thames to the sea, there was not one that could translate the easiest piece of Latin.—In 1167, King Henry II. sends to Ireland, and causes a palace of *wattles* to be built in Dublin, after the manner of the country, wherein he keeps his Christmas. It was not till 1209 that London began to be governed by a mayor : and so near our own times as the year 1246, most of the houses in that capital were thatched with *straw* :—the windows were

without glass :—and all the fires stood *to* the wall without *chimnies.* In the year 1300, and afterwards, almost all the houses in England were built of wood.—

" As our traveller gives us only his own authority, for what he says of Scotland at the time of the Union, a testimony which the Reader by this time cannot think altogether unexceptionable ; let us now see what others have reported of the state of civilization among us long before that period.

" When Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. of England, became the Queen of our James IV. she was attended to the Scotch court by many of the first nobility of both sexes : and yet the English historians of those days allow, that they were fully equalled, or even excelled, by the Scotch nobility in politeness of manners, the number of their jewels, and the richness of their dress ; and particularly, that the entertainments they received at the houses of our great people did not yield to any thing they had ever seen.

" In 1546, *Contarini* was Pope's Legate in Scotland ; and upon his return to the continent, he celebrated the Scotch nation as a *polite* and *hospitable* people. He bore this testimony to their merit, though he could not succeed in the object of his embassy ; which was to support the Romish religion, then fast declining in that kingdom, on account of the intolerable cruelties of Cardinal Betoun. But this prelate, very unlike to Dr. Johnson, could not permit his prejudices as an ambassador to warp his veracity as a man.

" The Queen of James V. though a princess of so civilized a nation as France, acknowledged, that ' the court and the inhabitants of Scotland were the most *polite* and *civilized* she had ever seen, and the palace of *Linlithgow* the most *magnificent.*' "

After these remarks on Scottish *politeness*, Mr. M'Nicol, by a long and indeed curious quotation from Lindsay's History of Scotland, attempts to establish his country's claim to *profuseness* in the article of good cheer, and produceth as a specimen of uncommon luxuriance, " the Earl of Athol's feast to James V."—But for this we must refer to the book.

The *coup de grace* to the authenticity of the Poems of Ossian has, in the opinion of many, been effectually given by Dr. Johnson, who hath asserted without reserve, that there exists not an Erse manuscript of a hundred years date. Mr. M'Nicol contests this assertion with much spirit, and in our opinion thoroughly disproves it. He observes, "That not only poems of considerable length, but likewise genealogies of families, and treatises on different subjects, have been anciently written in the Gaelic, and that this hath been proved by a variety of instances. Let me now produce an additional testimony from Mr. Innes. In page 603 of his Inquiry, he mentions a chronicle of a few of our Kings, from *Kenneth Macalpine* to Kenneth III. son to Malcolm I. and he says, that the original chronicle or history, from which that piece was extracted, seems evidently to have been written in the *Gaelic* language, and that some time too before the year 1291. He hath preserved in his Appendix the Latin chronicle, which is a copy of the original.—Among the old MSS. of considerable length, I took notice particularly of two. One gives the history of *Smerbie More*, one of the ancestors of the Duke of Argyle, who lived in the 5th century, according to a manuscript genealogy of that illustrious family; and the other contains the history of the sons of *Usnoth*. They are both in the Gaelic language and character, and are so very old as to be difficult to be read. They are in the possession of Mr. Macintyre of Glencoe, near Bunaw, in Argyleshire.

"But as the Doctor may think it too great a trouble to travel again to the Highlands for a sight of old manuscripts, I shall put him in the way of being satisfied nearer home. If he will call some morning on John Mackenzie, Esq; of the Temple, Secretary to the Highland-Society at the Shakspeare, Covent Garden, he will find in London more volumes in the *Gaelic* language and character than perhaps he will be pleased to look at, after what he hath said. They are written on vellum, in a very elegant manner, and they all bear very high marks of antiquity. None of them are of so modern an origin as that mentioned by the Doctor. Some of them have been written above 500 years

ago; and others are so very old, that their dates can only be guessed at from the subjects of which they treat.

"Among these are two volumes which are very remarkable. The one is a large folio MS. called *An Duanaireadh Ruadh*, or the *Red Rhymer*, which was given by Mr. M'Donald of *Glenealladel*, in *Muideart*, to Mr. M'Donald of Kyles, in *Cnoideart*, who gave it to Mr. Macpherson. It contains a variety of subjects, such as some of *Ossian's* Poems, Highland Tales, &c.—The other is called *An Leabhar Dearg*, or the *Red Book*, which was given to Mr. Macpherson by the bard *Macvurich*. This was reckoned one of the most valuable manuscripts in the bard's possession.

"Since I began these Remarks, I have been informed by Mr. Macdonald, the publisher of the *Gaelic* poetry, that his uncle, Mr. Lauchlan Macdonald of *South Uist*, was well acquainted with the last of these manuscripts; and as that gentleman is a great master of the Gaelic language and character, his opinion concerning its antiquity, from the character and other circumstances, is the more to be relied on.

"To finish this head, at present, let me next inform the Doctor, that the bard *Macvurich* alone is in possession of a greater number of *Gaelic* manuscripts than the Doctor perhaps would chuse to read in any language. At the earnest and repeated request of Mr. Macdonald, the publisher just mentioned, the bard hath been at last prevailed on to open his repositories, and to permit a part of them to be carried to Edinburgh for the satisfaction of the curious —I myself have seen more than a *thousand* pages of what has been thus obtained, as have hundreds besides: and Mr. Macdonald assures me, that what he has got leave to carry away bears but a very small proportion to what still remains with the bard.

"It seems almost unnecessary to mention, that all those manuscripts are in the *Gaelic* language and character. Some of them have suffered greatly by bad keeping; but many more by the ravages of time. The character of several is allowed by all who have seen the manuscripts, to be the most beautiful they had ever beheld."

Of the bard Macvurich, above mentioned, our Author gives us a curious account; for which we refer to the book.

Dr. Johnson having with great plausibility attempted to overthrow the authenticity of *Ossian's* Poems, by remarking, that it was next to impossible for any persons to have committed them to memory, considering the great length of some of them, Mr. M'Nicol combats the force of this objection with much dexterity and acuteness, by observing, that "though nothing had ever been written in the *Gaelic*, yet the manners and customs of the Highlanders were peculiarly adapted for preserving the various productions in their language. The constant practice of recitation, which is not yet disused, gave them 'opportunities of hearing a long composition often enough to learn it'; and their desire to amuse themselves in the solitudes of hunting, or a pastoral life, as well as to bear their part in social entertainments, gave them 'inclination to repeat it as often as was necessary to retain it.' —By these means, there was no great danger of any thing being so far forgotten as to be 'lost forever'; for if any *one* person should forget a particular part, there were always *thousands* who remembered the whole. . . . Our tales, which are for the most part of considerable length, bear a great resemblance to the *Arabian Nights Entertainment.* One of those in particular is long enough to furnish subject of amusement for several nights running. It is called *Scialachd Choise Ce*, or *Cian O Cathan's Tale:* and though *Schialachies*, or tellers of tales by profession, are not now retained by our great families as formerly, there are many still living who can repeat it from beginning to end, very accurately.

"This cannot appear improbable to those who consider how much the memory is strengthened and improved by frequent use. When duly and constantly exercised, it is capable of surprising exertions: and we have sometimes read of instances which amount even to prodigies.

"I myself once knew a man, who, I am certain, could repeat no less than 15,000 lines: and there is now living one *Poet Macintyre*, who can repeat several thousands.

This man is altogether illiterate, though not a despicable poet. Besides remembering many of the compositions of others, and likewise of his own, not yet published, he lately dictated from memory as many songs, composed by himself, as fill a volume of 162 pages, and amount to upwards of 4000 lines."

From a paper, signed *W. Cambrensis*, and published in the St. James's Chronicle of the 23d of March 1775, Mr. M'Nicol extracts the following quotation, as a farther support of the above remarks on the power of memory. "I can with truth aver (says the Author of that paper in the Chronicle), and what many will affirm, that there are several persons in *Wales* who can repeat the transactions (however fabulous) of *Arthur* and his *mil-ywr*, i.e. his thousand heroes, which are as long as the Poems of *Ossian*." This writer remarks, that the poems of *Taliessen*, who flourished in the year 500, the chief of the Welch bards, were handed down by tradition like the Poems of Ossian.

To give still further credit to this traditionary delivery of poems from one age to another, Mr. M'Nicol observes, that "the practice of committing much to memory seems to be very old, and probably was borrowed from the *Druids*, who, as we are assured by authors of credit, were obliged to get 20,000 lines by heart, before they were judged fit to exercise their office; for it was an established maxim among them, never to commit any of their religious tenets to writing."

On the whole, we have in this performance of Mr. M'Nicol's but little real information respecting the state of Scotland. The most curious part is that which relates to the bards, and of which we have already taken due notice. The Remarker, anxious to confute Dr. Johnson, has, to our knowledge, in many places, coloured the picture so highly as to obscure the resemblance; and though he sometimes convicts Dr. Johnson of partiality, yet he more frequently discovers his own.

SECTION III

THE ENGLISH POETS
REMARKS ON JOHNSON'S LIFE OF MILTON

III

July 1779 Vol. 61 p. 1[1]

THE long-expected beautiful edition of the English poets has at length made its appearance. Promises that are delayed too frequently, end in disappointment; but to this remark the present publication is an exception. We must ingenuously confess, that, from the first of its being advertised, we considered Dr. Johnson's *name* merely as a lure which the proprietors of the work had obtained, to draw in the unwary purchaser; taking it for granted that he would have just allotted, as he owns he originally intended, to every poet, an advertisement, like those which are found in the French miscellanies, containing a few dates, and a general character; an undertaking, as he observes, not very tedious or difficult; and, we may add, an undertaking also that would have conferred not much reputation upon the Writer, nor have communicated much information to his readers. Happily for both, *the honest desire of giving useful pleasure*, to borrow his own expression, has led him beyond his first intention. This honest desire is very amply gratified. In the walk of biography and criticism, Dr. Johnson has long been without a rival. It is barely justice to acknowledge that he still maintains his superiority. The present work is no way inferior to the best of his very celebrated productions of the same class.

Of the four volumes of his Prefaces already published (more lives being promised), the first is allotted to Cowley and Waller, the second to Milton and Butler, the third is appropriated entirely to Dryden, and the fourth is divided between poets of inferior name, Denham, Sprat, Roscom-

[1] ART. I. *The Works of the English Poets, with Prefaces Biographical and Critical.* By Samuel Johnson. The Heads engraved by Bartolozzi, &c. Small 8vo. 60 vols. 7*l.* 10*s.* half bound. Bathurst, &c. 1779.

mon, Rochester, Yalden, Otway, Duke, Dorset, Halifax, Stepney, Walsh, Garth, King, J. Philips, Smith, Pomfret, and Hughes.

In the narrative of Cowley's life there is little, except the manner in which it is told, that is new; but this deficiency, which was not in the Biographer's power to remedy, is fully compensated for in the review of his writings, which abounds in original criticism. Cowley's poetical character is introduced with an account of a race of writers who appeared about the beginning of the seventeenth century, whom Dr. Johnson terms the *Metaphysical Poets.*

"The metaphysical poets, says he, were men of learning, and to shew their learning was their whole endeavour; but, unluckily resolving to shew it in rhyme, instead of writing poetry, they only wrote verses, and very often such verses as stood the trial of the singer better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect, that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables.

"If the father of criticism has rightly denominated poetry (*τέχνη μιμητική*), *an imitative art*, these writers will, without great wrong, lose their right to the name of poets; for they cannot be said to have imitated any thing: they neither copied nature nor life; neither painted the forms of matter, nor represented the operations of intellect.

"Those however who deny them to be poets, allow them to be wits. Dryden confesses of himself and his contemporaries, that they fall below Donne in wit, but maintains that they surpass him in poetry.

"If Wit be well described by Pope, as being 'that which has been often thought, but was never before so well expressed,' they certainly never attained, nor ever sought it; for they endeavoured to be singular in their thoughts, and were careless of their diction. But Pope's account of wit is undoubtedly erroneous: he depresses it below its natural dignity, and reduces it from strength of thought to happiness of language.

"If by a more noble and more adequate conception that be considered as Wit, which is at once natural and

new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just; if it be that, which he that never found it, wonders how he missed; to wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen. Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found.

"But Wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of *discordia concors*; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtilty surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and though he sometimes admires is seldom pleased.

"From this account of their compositions it will be readily inferred, that they were not successful in representing or moving the affections. As they were wholly employed on something unexpected and surprising, they had no regard to that uniformity of sentiment which enables us to conceive and to excite the pains and the pleasure of other minds: they never enquired what, on any occasion, they should have said or done; but wrote rather as beholders than partakers of human nature; as Beings looking upon good and evil, impassive and at leisure; as Epicurean deities making remarks on the actions of men, and the vicissitudes of life, without interest and without emotion. Their courtship was void of fondness, and their lamentation of sorrow. Their wish was only to say what they hoped had been never said before.

"Nor was the sublime more within their reach than the pathetic; for they never attempted that comprehension and expanse of thought which at once fills the whole mind, and of which the first effect is sudden astonishment,

and the second rational admiration. Sublimity is produced by aggregation, and littleness by dispersion. Great thoughts are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions, and in descriptions not descending to minuteness. It is with great propriety that Subtlety, which in its original import means exility of particles, is taken in its metaphorical meaning for nicety of distinction. Those writers who lay on the watch for novelty could have little hope of greatness; for great things cannot have escaped former observation. Their attempts were always analytic; they broke every image into fragments; and could no more represent, by their slender conceits and laboured particularities, the prospects of nature, or the scenes of life, than he, who dissects a sun beam with a prism, can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon.

"What they wanted however of the sublime, they endeavoured to supply by hyperbole; their amplification had no limits; they left not only reason but fancy behind them; and produced combinations of confused magnificence, that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined.

"Yet great labour, directed by great abilities, is never wholly lost; if they frequently threw away their wit upon false conceits, they likewise sometimes struck out unexpected truth: if their conceits were far-fetched, they were often worth the carriage. To write on their plan, it was at least necessary to read and think. No man could be born a metaphysical poet, nor assume the dignity of a writer, by descriptions copied from descriptions, by imitations borrowed from imitations, by traditional imagery, and hereditary similes, by readiness of rhyme, and volubility of syllables.

"In perusing the works of this race of authors, the mind is exercised either by recollections or inquiry; either something already learned is to be retrieved, or something new is to be examined. If their greatness seldom elevates, their acuteness often surprises; if the imagination is not always gratified, at least the powers of reflection and comparison are employed; and in the mass of materials which ingenious absurdity has thrown

together, genuine wit and useful knowledge may be sometimes found, buried perhaps in grossness of expression, but useful to those who know their value; and such as, when they are expanded to perspicuity, and polished to elegance, may give lustre to works which have more propriety, though less copiousness of sentiment.

"This kind of writing, which was, I believe, borrowed from Marino and his followers, had been recommended by the example of Donne, a man of very extensive and various knowledge, and by Jonson, whose manner resembled that of Donne more in the ruggedness of his lines than in the cast of his sentiments.

"When their reputation was high, they had undoubtedly more imitators than time has left behind. Their immediate successors, of whom any remembrance can be said to remain, were Suckling, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Cleveland, and Milton. Denham and Waller sought another way to fame, by improving the harmony of our numbers. Milton tried the metaphysic stile only in his lines upon Hobson the Carrier. Cowley adopted it, and excelled his predecessors, having as much sentiment, and more music. Suckling neither improved versification, nor abounded in conceits. The fashionable stile remained chiefly with Cowley; Suckling could not reach it, and Milton disdained it."

He then proceeds to illustrate his remarks by examples, in the selection of which he is singularly happy. Of these examples the limits of the present Article will not admit of more than the following from Dr. Donne. It is a most curious specimen of *metaphysical gallantry:*

> "As the sweet sweat of roses in a still,
> As that which from chaf'd musk-cat's pores doth trill,
> As the almighty balm of th' early East,
> Such are the sweet drops of my mistress' breast.
> And on her neck her skin such lustre sets,
> They seem no sweat drops, but pearl coronets:
> Rank sweaty froth thy mistress' brow defiles."

"In all these examples it is apparent," as the Critic judiciously remarks, that whatever is improper or vicious, is produced by a voluntary deviation from nature in pur-

suit of something new and strange; and that the writers fail to give delight, by their desire of exciting admiration.

"To chuse the best, among many good, is one of the most hazardous attempts of criticism." Dr. Johnson ventures, however, to recommend Cowley's first piece, which he tells us ought to be inscribed *To my Muse*, for the want of which the second couplet is without reference. The Ode to Wit, he pronounces to be almost without a rival; and in the verses upon Crashaw, which apparently, says he, excel all that have gone before them, there are beauties which common authors may justly think not only above their attainment, but above their ambition. It were to be wished that a poet, of whom Cowley could speak in such terms of admiration as are to be met with in the verses alluded to, had been admitted into the present collection, or at least that some specimens of his works had been preserved in it.

In speaking of the Pindarique Ode of the last century, Dr. Sprat, the former biographer of Cowley, tells us, that the *irregularity of numbers is the very thing* which makes *that kind of poesy fit for all manner of subjects.* But, continues his present historian, he should have remembered that what is fit for every thing can fit nothing well.

"The great pleasure of verse arises from the known measure of the lines, and uniform structure of the stanzas, by which the voice is regulated, and the memory relieved.

"If the Pindaric stile be, what Cowley thinks it, *the highest and noblest kind of writing in verse*, it can be adapted only to high and noble subjects; and it will not be easy to reconcile the poet with the critic, or to conceive how that can be the highest kind of writing in verse, which, according to Sprat, *is chiefly to be preferred for its near affinity to prose.*

"This lax and lawless versification so much concealed the deficiencies of the barren, and flattered the laziness of the idle, that it immediately overspread our books of poetry; all the boys and girls caught the pleasing fashion, and they that could do nothing else could write like Pindar. The rights of antiquity were invaded, and disorder tried to break into the Latin: a poem on the Sheldonian Theatre,

in which all kinds of verse are shaken together, is unhappily inserted in the Musæ Anglicanæ. Pindarism prevailed above half a century; but at last died gradually away, and other imitations supply its place."

While he was upon this subject, we could have wished to have had Dr. Johnson's sentiments on the present pedantic affectation of dividing the English Ode into Strophe, Antistrophe, and Epode. Had the same reasons for such division subsisted now, as prevailed in the times of Pindar, our ode-writers would certainly have had some excuse for adopting it. We may be told, indeed, that this practice has the sanction of the *highest poetical authority*, we mean that of the late Mr. Gray; but in answer to this we may observe, that as no authority can sanctify absurdity neither should it prevail with us to adopt what both common sense and reason are compelled to disapprove.

The neglect and obscurity of Cowley's principal poem the *Davideis*, is accounted for both from the choice of his subject, and from the performance of the work.

"Sacred History has been always read with submissive reverence, and an imagination over-awed and controlled. We have been accustomed to acquiesce in the nakedness and simplicity of the authentic narrative, and to repose on its veracity with such humble confidence, as suppresses curiosity. We go with the historian as he goes, and stop with him when he stops. All amplification is frivolous and vain; all addition to that which is already sufficient for the purpose of religion, seems not only useless, but in some degree profane.

"Such events as were produced by the visible interposition of Divine Power are above the power of human genius to dignify. The miracle of Creation, however it may teem with images, is best described with little diffusion of language: *He spake the word, and they were made.*"

It is not to be supposed that in a poem labouring with these disadvantages, his critic will find much to admire. His character of the Davideis is contained in few words: "In the perusal of the Davideis, as of all Cowley's works, we find wit and learning unprofitably squandered. Attention has no relief; the affections are never moved; we

are sometimes surprised, but never delighted, and find much to admire, but little to approve. Still however it is the work of Cowley, of a mind capacious by nature, and replenished by study."

It is something singular that neither Dr. Johnson nor a former Editor [1] of the *select* works of this writer take any notice of the following beautiful ode which David is supposed to sing under the windows of Michal's chamber, when he first declares his passion to her:

" Awake, awake, my lyre !
" And tell thy silent master's humble tale,
" In sounds that may prevail ;
" Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire :
" Though so exalted she,
" And I so lowly be,
" Tell her, such different notes make all thy harmony.

" Hark ! how the strings awake ;
" And, though the moving hand approach not near,
" Themselves with awful fear,
" A kind of numerous trembling make.
" Now all thy forces try,
" Now all thy charms apply,
" Revenge upon her ear the conquests of her eye.

" Weak lyre ! thy virtue sure
" Is useless here, since thou art only found
" To cure, but not to wound,
" And she to wound, but not to cure.
" Too weak too wilt thou prove
" My passion to remove,
" Physic to other ills, thou'rt Nourishment to Love.

" Sleep, sleep again, my lyre !
" For thou canst never tell my humble tale
" In sounds that will prevail ;
" Nor gentle thoughts in her inspire :
" All thy vain mirth lay by,
" Bid thy strings silent lie,
" Sleep, sleep again, my lyre ! and let thy master die."

The elegance and harmony of this little piece ought, before this, to have intitled it to selection. Indeed there are an hundred and thirty lines immediately preceding it, in which the characters of the two sisters, Merab and Michal, are drawn with great happiness, that merit notice,

[1] See Monthly Review, vol. xlviii, p. 10, where our sentiments of Cowley's poetical merit may be seen at large.

if it were for nothing but this, that they are totally free from every characteristic fault with which this Writer is charged. But this is not all their merit: they abound with beauties *which common writers may justly think not only above their attainment, but above their ambition.*

The character of Cowley, in which we perceive no marks of partiality, is thus concluded:

"It may be affirmed, without any encomiastic fervour, that he brought to his poetic labours a mind replete with learning, and that his pages are embellished with all the ornaments which books could supply; that he was the first who imparted to English numbers the enthusiasm of the greater ode, and the gaiety of the less; that he was equally qualified for spritely sallies, and for lofty flights; that he was among those who freed translation from servility, and instead of following his author at a distance, walked by his side; and that if he left versification yet improvable, he left likewise from time to time such specimens of excellence as enabled succeeding poets to improve it."

The preface to the works of Waller comes next in succession. The moral and political character of this applauded writer are developed with great skill and acuteness. Ever attentive to the more important interests of mankind, and sensible that biography ought to be a lesson of virtue, Dr. Johnson never omits to intersperse, amongst the different parts of his narration, either maxims of prudence or reflexions on the conduct of human life: something that may either direct the judgment or meliorate the heart. In the lives of Waller and his contemporary poets he has proceeded farther; he has made them the vehicles of his political orthodoxy. As we profess the principles of universal toleration, we shall leave his political opinions to themselves. Were we, indeed, disposed to controvert them, it might be considered as an unnecessary trouble. There will never want combatants to attack a man of Dr. Johnson's reputation, when the attack is to be made on a vulnerable part.

As the limits of our Review will not permit us to accompany our Biographer through the whole extent of his

criticism on this Writer, we shall confine ourselves chiefly to that part of it which is allotted to his sacred poems, which do not please, we are told, like some of his other works.

" It has been the frequent lamentation of good men, that verse has been too little applied to the purposes of worship, and many attempts have been made to animate devotion by pious poetry; that they have very seldom attained their end is sufficiently known, and it may not be improper to enquire why they have miscarried.

" Let no pious ear be offended if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defended in a didactic poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verse, will not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and the grandeur of Nature, the flowers of the Spring, and the harvests of Autumn, the vicissitudes of the Tide, and the revolutions of the Sky, and praise the Maker for his works in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God.

" Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

" The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topics of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression.

" Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford. This effect proceeds from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those which repel the imagination: but religion must be shewn as it is; suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already.

" From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

" The employments of pious meditation are Faith, Thanksgiving, Repentance, and Supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication of man to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

" Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself. All that verse can do is to help the memory, and delight the ear, and for these purposes it may be very useful; but it supplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Christian Theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere."

It is thus that he very properly accounts for the failure of Waller in his sacred poems, and not their being written, as his former Editor supposes, after his genius had passed the zenith.

" That natural jealousy which makes every man unwilling to allow much excellence in another, always produces a disposition to believe that the mind grows old with the body; and that he, whom we are now forced to confess superior, is hastening daily to a level with ourselves. By delighting to think this of the living, we learn

to think it of the dead ; and Fenton, with all his kindness for Waller, has the luck to mark the exact time when his genius passed the zenith, which he places at his fifty-fifth year. This is to allot the mind but a small portion. Intellectual decay is doubtless not uncommon ; but it seems not to be universal. Newton was in his eighty-fifth year improving his Chronology, a few days before his death ; and Waller appears not, in my opinion, to have lost at eighty-two any part of his poetical powers."

Some writers carry this fanciful idea of Fenton's still farther, asserting that, though judgment may retain its vigour to a more distant period, imagination gradually decays at thirty-six. Were arguments wanting to confute such groundless assertions, we need only adduce the instance of the learned and ingenious Critic whose observations are now before us. He, certainly, has passed the zenith allotted to imagination, and probably the farther term which Fenton assigns to the genius of Waller, and yet his writings betray no abatement of intellectual abilities : his imagination still retains the full vigour of youth.— But enough of this trifling ; let us return to Waller.

" The general character of his poetry, says his biographer, is elegance and gaiety. He is never pathetic, and very rarely sublime. He seems neither to have had a mind much elevated by nature, nor amplified by learning. His thoughts are such as a liberal conversation and large acquaintance with life would easily supply. They had however, then perhaps, that grace of novelty, which they are now often supposed to want by those who, having already found them in later books, do not know or enquire who produced them first. This treatment is unjust. Let not the original author lose by his imitators.—

" But of the praise of Waller, though much may be taken away, much will remain ; for it cannot be denied that he added something to our elegance of diction, and something to our propriety of thought ; and to him may be applied what Tasso said, with equal spirit and justice, of himself and Guarini, when, having perused the *Pastor Fido*, he cried out, ' If he had not read *Aminta*, he had not excelled it.' "

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The active part which Milton took in the public transactions of the times he lived in, will ever subject him to the misrepresentations of partiality or prejudice. In the biographical part of the preface before us, we have observed some passages not totally free from the influence of one of these principles.

In the opening of the narrative, after mentioning some other particulars of his family, we are told that " his father had two sons, John the poet, and Christopher, who studied the law, and adhered, as the law taught him, to the King's party. After the accession of King James, he was knighted, and made a judge; but, his constitution being too weak for business, he retired before any disreputable compliances became necessary." Fenton says, " by too easy a compliance with the doctrines of the court, both religious and civil, he attained to the dignity of being made a judge of the Common Pleas, of which he died divested not long after the Revolution." As he is said to have adhered *to what the law taught him*, we will hope, though there doth not seem much reason to believe, that he retired before any disreputable compliances became necessary. Yet, when the disposition of the times is considered, it is far from probable that he should have been advanced from the obscurity of chamber practice, which he followed, to sit as a judge in the court of Common Pleas, unless his readiness of compliance had been previously known. But, perhaps, as he adhered, as the law taught him, to King Charles's party, the biographer thought him entitled to some little indulgence.

Milton was first educated under a domestic tutor, and afterward sent to St. Paul's school, from whence, in the beginning of his sixteenth year, he was removed to Cambridge. We are told, " there is reason to suspect that he was regarded in his college with no great fondness. That he obtained no fellowship is certain; but the unkindness with which he was treated was not merely negative. I am ashamed," continues the biographer, " to relate what I fear is true, that Milton was the last student in either

university, that suffered the public indignity of corporal correction.

"It was, in the violence of controversial hostility, objected to him, that he was expelled: this he steadily denies, and it was apparently not true; but it seems plain from his own verses to *Diodati*, that he had incurred *Rustication*; a temporary dismission into the country, with perhaps the loss of a term:

> Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura revifere Camum,
> Nec dudum vetiti me laris angit amor;
> Nec duri libet usque minas perferre magistri,
> Cæteraque ingenio non fubuenda meo.

"I cannot find any meaning but this, which even kindness and reverence can give to the term, *vetiti laris*, 'a habitation from which he is excluded'; or how *exile* can be otherwise interpreted. He declares yet more, that he is weary of enduring *the threats of a rigorous master, and something else, which a temper like his cannot undergo.* What was more than threat was evidently punishment."

If the evidence of Milton's suffering the public indignity of corporal correction rest only on the above quoted lines, there is certainly a construction put upon them which the sense by no means requires. By rendering *cæteraque* in the singular number, the application which in the original is general, in the translation is made particular. There are many insults and indignities which academical subordination might make him liable to, beside corporal correction, or the threats of rustication or expulsion, which a temper like Milton's might find a difficulty in submitting to. But supposing the conjecture to be true, shame would surely never suffer him even to allude to what he could not but think of with the utmost indignation, nor is it probable he would ever wish to revisit scenes where he had suffered such public indignity.

When the biographer comes to that part of Milton's life when he returned from abroad, he tells us, that "hearing of the differences between the King and parliament, he thought it proper to hasten home, rather than pass his

life in foreign amusements while his countrymen were contending for their rights. At his return he hired a lodging at the house of one Russel a taylor, in St. Bride's Church-yard, and undertook the education of John and Edward Philips, his sister's sons. Finding his rooms too little, he took a house and garden in Aldersgate-street. Here he received more boys to be boarded and instructed." He then breaks off his narrative to exclaim, " Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performance, on the man who hastens home, because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school."

What the Doctor finds to excite merriment we own ourselves ignorant of. Whatever might be Milton's patriotism it was necessary he should live. To do this with competence and convenience, he undertook the education of youth. The necessity of this is acknowledged. " His allowance was not ample, and he supplied its deficiencies by an honest and useful employment." That he promised more than other men in the like situations may be doubted; that he performed less is what no man can have the hardness to affirm. He had not been above a year in England before he signalized himself, and assisted the cause which he espoused, by his treatise of *Reformation*, in two books. This work was soon followed by another, and that, in the year following, by a third. With what propriety, therefore, are we to look with merriment at *his vapouring away his patriotism in a private boarding-school?* In what follows we fully agree with our Author:

" This is the period of his life from which all his biographers seem inclined to shrink. They are unwilling that Milton should be degraded to a school-master; but since it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out that he taught for nothing, and another that his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue; and all tell what they do not know to be true, only to excuse an act which no wise man will consider as in itself disgraceful. His father was alive; his allowance was not

ample, and he supplied its deficiencies by an honest and useful employment.

" It is told, continues this Writer, that in the art of education he performed wonders; and a formidable list is given of the authors, Greek and Latin, that were read in Aldersgate-street, by youth between ten and fifteen or sixteen years of age. Those who tell or receive these theories, should consider that nobody can be taught faster than he can learn. The speed of the best horseman must be limited by the powers of his horse. Every man, that has ever undertaken to instruct others, can tell what slow advances he has been able to make, and how much patience it requires to recal vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference, and to rectify absurd misapprehension."

Notwithstanding we give full credit to the justness of these remarks, we cannot think it impossible but Milton might make many improvements upon the modes of education which at that time might prevail; he certainly was capable of striking out new roads to learning that might possibly be shorter and easier than those that were usually travelled. For, though it be true " that the speed of the best horseman must be limited by the power of his horse," yet, were Dr. Johnson to ride a fox-chace, he would find that his speed would depend not only upon the power of his horse, but also upon the choice of his ground.

" The purpose of Milton, as it seems, was to teach something more solid than the common literature of schools, by reading those authors that treat of physical subjects; such as the Georgic, and astronomical treatises of the ancients. This was a scheme of improvement which seems to have busied many literary projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was wanting to the embellishments of life, formed the same plan of education in his imaginary college.

" But the truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and of the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, is not the great or the frequent business of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or conversation, whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first

requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples which may be said to embody truth, and prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and justice are virtues, and excellencies, of all times, and of all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary, and at leisure. Physical knowledge is of such rare emergence, that one man may know another half his life without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostatics or astronomy; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears.

"Those authors, therefore, are to be read at schools that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation; and these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians.

"Let me not be censured for this digression as pedantic or paradoxical; for if I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side. It was his labour to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life, but the innovators whom I oppose are turning off attention from Life to nature. They seem to think, that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars. Socrates was rather of opinion, that what we had to learn was, how to do good, and avoid evil.

Ὅττί τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακόν τ' ἀγαθόν τε τέτυκται.

That those authors are to be read at schools which supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials of conversation, is too evident to be denied: that these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians, such as are commonly read at schools, may be doubted. It may be doubted also how far the present question can be any way influenced by the example of Socrates. His methods of instruction seem to differ as much from the modes of education which Dr. Johnson means to defend, as it is possible for Milton's to do. We should apprehend the innovators who are here opposed, never intended to "turn off attention from life

to nature" : they seem to have been actuated by the more rational idea of uniting the study of nature with the knowledge of life. Does not our Author, with respect to Milton, in some degree acknowledge as much? "One part of his method, says he, deserves general imitation. He was careful to instruct his scholars in religion. Every Sunday was spent upon theology.

"Of institutions we may judge by their effects. From this wonder-working academy, I do not know that there ever proceeded any man very eminent for knowledge: its only genuine product, I believe, is a small History of Poetry, written in Latin by his nephew, of which perhaps none of my readers has ever heard."

When it is considered how small must have been the number of Milton's scholars, it is matter of wonder rather than of reproach, that even one should ever rise to literary distinction. Were the history of all the schools through the kingdom to be enquired into, we should not find above one scholar in five hundred that ever attains to a like degree of eminence.

Milton, as may naturally be supposed, was an advocate for the liberty of the press. He published a book on that subject, intituled, Areopagitica, a speech of Mr. John Milton for the liberty of unlicensed printing.

"The danger, says his Biographer, of such unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the science of government, which human understanding seems hitherto unable to solve. If nothing may be published but what civil authority shall have previously approved, power must always be the standard of truth; if every dreamer of innovations may propagate his projects, there can be no settlement; if every murmurer at government may diffuse discontent, there can be no peace; and if every sceptic in theology may teach his follies, there can be no religion. The remedy against these evils is to punish the authors; for it is yet allowed that every society may punish, though not prevent, the publication of opinions, which that society shall think pernicious: but this punishment, though it may crush the author, promotes the book; and it seems not more

reasonable to leave the right of printing unrestrained, because writers may be afterwards censured, than it would be to sleep with doors unbolted, because by our laws we can hang a thief."

To those who wish not to favour the designs of arbitrary power, no such problem is to be found in the whole science of government. The arguments by which it is attempted to make this grand question problematical might be allowed to have some weight, provided they were altogether true. That every dreamer of innovations propagates his projects is acknowledged; is it therefore true that there is no settlement? That every murmurer at government diffuses his discontent is acknowledged likewise; but have we, therefore, no peace? That every sceptic in theology teaches his follies is not to be denied; yet Dr. Johnson will surely not be so hardy as to affirm that we have no religion. In those countries where the press is restrained have they more religion? Or, indeed, have they so much? So far from suspecting that religion is injured by the liberty which every one enjoys of diffusing his own opinions, we are rather disposed to believe she is benefited by it. Were doubt and objection never to be started, it is probable that truth would be but seldom inquired into: were not error to be confuted, truth could never be established: were the attack of the sceptic and infidel to be suspended, the champions of religion would forget the use of their weapons; the centinel would sometimes sleep upon guard. It is by a scrutiny into the principles of religion that the duties of religious obligation are more forcibly impressed upon the mind; and were it not for the sceptic in theology, such a scrutiny would be but rarely thought of or attended to. The illustration of his argument is by no means analogous: an author's motives for publication may be many and laudable; a thief can enter your house from no motive but to steal: if an author offend against the laws of society, he may be detected and punished; or if he escape, his bondsmen, as we may call them, the printer and publisher, are responsible for his crime. A thief may break into your house, and it is true that you may hang him, provided *he be caught*. But what security is there

that he *will* be caught, or if not, who is there to make compensation for the injury he may have done you? All this is to be supposed before the analogy between the thief and the author can hold good. Were it, indeed, to be the case, there would be as little to apprehend from the one as the other. If the moment we were robbed the thief were certain to be detected and hanged, a bolt to our doors would be an unnecessary precaution.

Milton's character is drawn in no amiable colours. According to Dr. Johnson, he labours under a suspicion of such atrocious villany as ought not, but upon the strongest grounds, to be admitted of any man.

"While he contented himself to write, he perhaps did only what his conscience dictated; and if he did not very vigilantly watch the influence of his own passions, and the gradual prevalence of opinions, first willingly admitted and then habitually indulged, if objections, by being overlooked, were forgotten, and desire superinduced conviction, he yet shared only the common weakness of mankind, and might be no less sincere than his opponents. But as faction seldom leaves a man honest, however it might find him, Milton is suspected of having interpolated the book called *Icon Basilike*, which the Council of State, to whom he was now made Latin secretary, employed him to censure, by inserting a prayer taken from *Sidney's Arcadia*, and imputing it to the King; whom he charges, in his *Iconoclastes*, with the use of this prayer as with a heavy crime, in the indecent language with which prosperity had emboldened the advocates for rebellion to insult all that is venerable or great: 'Who would have imagined so little fear in him of the true all-seeing Deity—as, immediately before his death, to pop into the hands of the grave Bishop that attended him, as a special relique of his saintly exercises, a prayer stolen word for word from the mouth of a heathen woman praying to a heathen god?'

"The papers which the King gave to Dr. Juxon on the scaffold the regicides took away, so that they were at least the publishers of this prayer; and Dr. Birch, who examined the question with great care, was inclined to think them

the forgers. The use of it by adaptation was innocent; and they who could so noisily censure it, with a little extension of their malice could contrive what they wanted to accuse."

That the regicides were not the forgers of the prayer in question, if we may judge from such evidence as appears, is more likely than that they were. That the use of it by adaptation was innocent, nobody will deny. To charge the author of *Icon Basilike* with the use of this prayer as with a heavy crime, was illiberal and indecent. But what circumstance in the life of Milton can warrant the suspicion that he either inserted it himself, or was privy to the insertion of it by others? Whatever might be his political errors, his moral character has been ever unimpeached; his regard for truth seems to have been inviolable; his religion appears to be free from every taint of hypocrisy; "he lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occasional agency of Providence"; how can we imagine then that he had *so little fear in him of the true all-seeing Deity*, as to be the perpetrator of such deliberate iniquity? But setting every argument that may be drawn from these considerations aside, there was a meanness in it too despicable for the pride of Milton ever to have submitted to.

The most culpable part of Milton's conduct seems to be his adulation of Cromwell.

Whoever has read Milton's life will recollect the circumstance which is related by his nephew Philips, that *his vein never happily flowed but from the autumnal equinox to the vernal.* This dependence of the soul upon the seasons is very justly ridiculed by his present historian; and yet we think it not impossible but the fact might have been true; though we are far from supposing it originated from any immediate influence of the seasons. It is well known that the activity of the mind will, in many cases, be restrained by the indisposition of the body. In the latter part of life Milton was much afflicted with the gout. The langour and oppression of spirits, that in a greater or less degree attend the accumulation of the gouty matter, previous to a regular fit, are generally acknowledged. In those habits, in which this disorder is regular, the gouty

matter usually accumulates during the summer and autumnal months: the fit generally commences in the winter, and abates as the spring advances. During the continuance of the fit, and for some time after it abates, the spirits of the arthritic are, for the most part, light and cheerful. If this solution be admitted, it will reconcile what Milton told Philips with what he says in his Elegies, which were probably written before he was ever subject to any periodical attacks of the malady in question, "where he declares that with the advance of spring he feels the increase of his poetical force—*Redeunt in carmina vires*"; though, probably, he had little meaning when he made use of the expression, as it contains nothing more than one of those common-place ideas which one poet adopts from another without thought or inquiry.

The slow sale and tardy reputation of the Paradise Lost have always been mentioned as evidences of neglected merit, and of the uncertainty of literary fame. Dr. Johnson proves that the case has not been truly stated, and that lamentation and wonder have been lavished on an evil that was never felt.

"That in the reigns of Charles and James the *Paradise Lost* received no public acclamations is readily confessed. Wit and literature were on the side of the Court: and who that solicited favour or the fashion would venture to praise the defender of the regicides? All that he himself could think his due, from *evil tongues* in *evil days*, was that reverential silence which was generously preserved. But it cannot be inferred that his poem was not read, or not, however unwillingly, admired.

"The sale, if it be considered, will justify the Public. Those who have no power to judge of past times but by their own, should always doubt their conclusions. The sale of books was not in Milton's age what it is in the present. To read was not then a general amusement; neither traders, nor often gentlemen, thought themselves disgraced by ignorance. The women had not then aspired to literature, nor was every house supplied with a closet of books. Those indeed, who professed learning, were not less learned than at any other time; but of that

middle race of students who read for pleasure or accomplishment, and who buy the numerous products of modern typography, the number was then comparatively small. To prove the paucity of readers, it may be sufficient to remark, that the nation had been satisfied, from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakespeare, which probably did not together make one thousand copies.

"The sale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in opposition to so much recent enmity, and to a style of versification new to all and disgusting to many, was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius. The demand did not immediately encrease; for many more readers than were supplied at first the nation did not afford. Only three thousand were sold in eleven years; for it forced its way without assistance; its admirers did not dare to publish their opinion; and the opportunities now given of attracting notice by advertisements were then very few; for the means of proclaiming the publication of new books have been produced by that general literature which now pervades the nation through all its ranks.

"But the reputation and price of the copy still advanced, till the Revolution put an end to the secrecy of love, and *Paradise Lost* broke into open view with sufficient security of kind reception."

Our Author closes his vindication of the public taste with a conjecture that does great credit to his own:

"Fancy, says he, can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked his reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting, without impatience, the vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation."

To point out the beauty of the above-quoted passage is certainly needless; an image more exquisitely pleasing can hardly be presented to the mind!

What is said of Milton's religion is, no doubt, justly

founded, and is applicable to many who have not his piety :

" He has not associated himself with any denomination of Protestants : we know rather what he was not, than what he was. He was not of the church of Rome ; he was not of the church of England.

" To be of no church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant, and which is animated only by Faith and Hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unless it be invigorated and reimpressed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had full conviction of the truth of Christianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundest veneration, to have been untainted by any heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occasional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any visible worship. In the distribution of his hours, there was no hour of prayer, either solitary, or with his household ; omitting public prayers, he omitted all.

" Of this omission the reason has been sought, upon a supposition which ought never to be made, that men live with their own approbation, and justify their conduct to themselves. Prayer certainly was not thought superfluous by him, who represents our first parents as praying acceptably in the state of innocence, and efficaciously after their fall. That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed ; his studies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which he condemned himself, and which he intended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation."

Though it be not improbable that Milton's republicanism might be, in some degree, founded " in petulance, impatient of controul, and pride disdainful of superiority," yet he surely was able to give some better reason for adopting republican principles than that *a popular government was the most frugal ; for the trappings of a monarchy would set up an ordinary commonwealth.* Though it be shallow policy, as Dr. Johnson observes, " to suppose money the

chief good, and though the support and expense of a Court be, for the most part, only a particular kind of traffic, by which money is circulated, without any *national impoverishment*," yet it is equally true that the extravagance of a Court, by taking from *the many* to lavish on *the few*, may be guilty of great *national injury*.

Through the whole of his narrative, Dr. Johnson seems to have no great partiality for Milton as a man: as a poet, however, he is willing to allow him every merit he is entitled to. In the examination of his poetical works he begins with his juvenile productions. The first that offer themselves to him are his Latin pieces. "These, says he, are lusciously elegant; but the delight which they afford is rather by the exquisite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction, and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention, or vigour of sentiment." This character, we apprehend, will generally suit our modern Latin poetry; but we may particularly except that noble ode of Mr. Gray's, written at the Grand Chartreuse, and some few others; there are not many of the *poemata Anglorum* that contain "much power of invention or vigour of sentiment.

"The English poems, though they make no promises of *Paradise Lost*, have this evidence of genius, that they have a cast original and unborrowed. But their peculiarity is not excellence: if they differ from the verses of others, they differ for the worse; for they are too often distinguished by repulsive harshness; the combinations of words are new, but they are not pleasing; the rhymes and epithets seem to be laboriously sought, and violently applied.

"That in the early part of his life he wrote with much care appears from his manuscripts, happily preserved at Cambridge, in which many of his smaller works are found as they were first written, with the subsequent corrections. Such reliques shew how excellence is acquired; what we hope ever to do with ease, we may learn first to do with diligence.

"Those who admire the beauties of this great poet, sometimes force their own judgment into false approbation

of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of suavity and softness; he was a *Lion* that had no skill *in dandling the Kid.*"

On Lycidas his censures are severe, and well enforced; he is of opinion no man could have fancied that he read Lycidas with pleasure, had he not known its author. L'Allegro and Il Penseroso are of different estimation. These he acknowledges to be two noble efforts of the imagination. But the greatest of his juvenile performances is the Mask of Comus; "in which, says the Critic, may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of *Paradise Lost.* Milton appears to have formed very early that system of diction, and mode of verse, which his maturer judgment approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor desired to deviate.

"Nor does *Comus* afford only a specimen of his language; it exhibits likewise his power of description, and his vigour of sentiment, employed in the praise and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets, embellish almost every period with lavish decoration. As a series of lines, therefore, it may be considered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it. As a drama it is deficient." This deficiency is unfolded in a masterly manner.

The Sonnets come next to be considered. These were written in different parts of Milton's life, upon different occasions. They deserve not, we are told, any particular criticism; for of the best it can only be said, that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth and the twenty-first are truly entitled to this slender commendation. The fabric of a sonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has never succeeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed.

Of the inconveniency of the *fabric of a sonnet* many of our writers seem to have been aware, having deviated,

and, as we think, judiciously, from the strict Italian model, by giving to their rhymes a greater liberty of change. But even of the legitimate sonnet we are not without many beautiful examples: no one will doubt this assertion who has read Mr. Warton's.

We are far from thinking the sonnet, especially when emancipated from the unnecessary restraint under which it has hitherto laboured, to be ill adapted to the English language. By uniting the elegance and dignity of the ode with the simplicity and conciseness of the ancient epigram, it seems to be a species of composition well suited to convey effusions of tenderness and affection; such incidental effusions, we mean, as flow not from a confluence of various ideas, but such rather as proceed from a single sentiment.

The Paradise Lost comes next to be examined: "A Poem, which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second among the productions of the human mind." Dr. Johnson's criticism on this immortal work extends through fifty pages. To give any adequate idea of it would much exceed our present limits. We cannot, however, resist the temptation of presenting our Readers with one extract from it:

"The thoughts which are occasionally called forth in the progress, are such as could only be produced by an imagination in the highest degree fervid and active, to which materials were supplied by incessant study and unlimited curiosity. The heat of Milton's mind might be said to sublimate his learning, to throw off into his work the spirit of science, unmingled with its grosser parts.

"He had considered creation in its whole extent, and his descriptions are therefore learned. He had accustomed his imagination to unrestrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore were extensive. The characteristic quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace; but his natural port is gigantic loftiness.[1] He can please when pleasure is required; but it is his peculiar power to astonish.

[1] "Algarotti terms it *gigantesca Sublimità Miltoniana.*"

"He seems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others; the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful: he therefore chose a subject on which too much could not be said, on which he might tire his fancy without the censure of extravagance.

"The appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, did not satiate his appetite of greatness. To paint things as they are, requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy. Milton's delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery, into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the counsels of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven.

"But he could not be always in other worlds: he must sometimes revisit earth, and tell of things visible and known. When he cannot raise wonder by the sublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility."

The above extract is given, not as having peculiar excellence, but merely as, from its detached nature, it best admitted of selection.

Of this truly excellent analysis and criticism, it is scarcely hyperbolical to affirm that it is executed with all the skill and penetration of Aristotle, and animated and embellished with all the fire of Longinus. It is every way worthy of its subject: the Paradise Lost is a poem which the mind of Milton only could have produced; the criticism before us is such as, perhaps, the pen of Johnson only could have written.

Sept. 1779 Vol. 61 p. 186

After the liberal attention that was bestowed upon the two former volumes of the present publication, it will be less necessary to enlarge upon those which remain.

The life of Dryden, the particulars of which are traced with great minuteness, contains, beside many curious and interesting anecdotes, much of the literary history of his

time; and the critical labour and attention that have been devoted to his works, do credit as well to the diligence as to the abilities of his learned *Reviewer*.

Dryden's merit as a prose writer having not, perhaps been sufficiently attended to or remarked, it will be a gratification to our Readers to know Dr. Johnson's sentiments concerning it:

"Criticism, either didactic or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, except those pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled; every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what is great, is splendid. He may be thought to mention himself too frequently; but while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Every thing is excused by the play of images and the spriteliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though, since his earlier works, more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete.

"He who writes much, will not easily escape a manner, such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always *another and the same*, he does not exhibit a second time the same elegances in the same form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigour. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously, for being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance."

From his prose, however, as Dr. Johnson properly remarks, Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise; "the veneration, continues he, with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of English Literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved

the sentiments, and tuned the numbers of English Poetry.

"After about half a century of forced thoughts, and rugged metre, some advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had shewn that long discourses in rhyme grew more pleasing when they were broken into couplets, and that verse consisted not only in the number but the arrangement of syllables.

"But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample comprehension. More examples of more modes of composition were necessary for the establishment of regularity, and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

"Every language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastic and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and gross; and from a nice distinction of these different parts, arises a great part of the beauty of style. But if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of selection was little known to our authors; our speech lay before them in a heap of confusion, and every man took for every purpose what chance might offer him.

"There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images, and words to which we are nearly strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves which they should convey to things.

"Those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose, had been rarely attempted; we had few elegancies or flowers of speech, the roses had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another.

"It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could

have overborn the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were sheltered by the protection of Cowley. The new versification, as it was called, may be considered as owing its establishment to Dryden; from whose time it is apparent that English poetry has had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness."

At the close of this volume is a copy of an original letter from Dryden to his sons in Italy. The manuscript is preserved in the Lambeth Library. It is a curiosity, and as such we present it to our Readers:

"Sept. the 3d, our stile.

"DEAR SONS,

"Being now at Sir William Bowyer's in the country, I cannot write at large because I find myself somewhat indisposed with a cold, and am thick of hearing, rather worse than I was in town. I am glad to find, by your letter of July 26th, your style, that you are both in health; but wonder you should think me so negligent as to forget to give you an account of the ship in which your parcel is to come. I have written to you two or three letters concerning it, which I have sent by safe hands, as I told you, and doubt not but you have them before this can arrive to you. Being out of town, I have forgotten the ship's name, which your mother will enquire, and put it into her letter, which is joined with mine. But the master's name I remember: he is called Mr. Ralph Thorp; the ship is bound to Leghorn, consigned to Mr. Peter and Mr. Tho. Ball, merchants. I am of your opinion, that by Tonson's means almost all our letters have miscarried for this last year. But however he has missed of his design in the Dedication, though he had prepared the book for it; for in every figure of Eneas he has caused him to be drawn, like K. William, with a hooked nose. After my return to town, I intend to alter a play of Sir Robert Howard's, written long since, and lately put by him into my hands: 'tis called the *Conquest of China by the Tartars*. It will cost me six weeks study, with the probable benefit of an hundred pounds. In the mean time I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the patroness of

music. This is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny the Stewards of the Feast, who came in a body to me to desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgman, whose parents are your mother's friends. I hope to send you thirty guineas between Michaelmass and Christmass, of which I will give you an account when I come to town. I remember the counsel you give me in your letter; but dissembling, though lawful in some cases, is not my talent; yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the plain openness of my nature, and keep in my just resentments against that degenerate order. In the mean time, I flatter not myself with any manner of hopes, but do my duty, and suffer for God's sake; being assured, beforehand, never to be rewarded, though the times should alter. Towards the latter end of this month, September, Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his nativity, which, casting it myself, I am sure is true, and all things hitherto have happened accordingly to the very time that I predicted them: I hope at the same time to recover more health, according to my age. Remember me to poor Harry, whose prayers I earnestly desire. My Virgil succeeds in the world beyond its desert or my expectation. You know the profits might have been more; but neither my conscience nor my honour would suffer me to take them: but I never can repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded of the justice of the cause for which I suffer. It has pleased God to raise up many friends to me amongst my enemies, though they who ought to have been my friends are negligent of me. I am called to dinner, and cannot go on with this letter, which I desire you to excuse; and am

"Your affectionate father,

"John Dryden."

This letter affords a confirmation of the stories that are told by Dryden's former biographers, of his being addicted to astrology; and that some of his predictions, particularly those relative to the fate of his son Charles, proved true. Neither wit nor wisdom are, at all times, sure defences against the delusions of superstition.

Of *the mob of Gentlemen* who are introduced into the fourth volume, if Denham (their leader) and a few others, be excepted, it may admit of a question how they came intitled to such a respectable situation. That it may not, however, be attributed to the partiality of the *ostensible* Editor, let him speak for himself,—in the following very short extracts :

Sprat

" He considered Cowley as a model ; and supposed that as he was imitated, perfection was approached. Nothing therefore but Pindaric liberty was to be expected. There is in his few productions no want of such conceits as he thought excellent ; and of those our judgment may be settled by the first that appears in his praise of Cromwell, where he says that Cromwell's *fame, like man, will grow white as it grows old.*"

Otway

" Of the poems which this collection admits, the longest is the *Poet's Complaint of his Muse,* part of which I do not understand ; and in that which is less obscure I find little to commend. The language is often gross, and the numbers are harsh."

Veneration for the author of the Orphan, and Venice Preserved, may be allowed in the present case to have had its influence.

Duke

" In his *Review,* though unfinished, are some vigorous lines. His poems are not below mediocrity ; nor have I found much in them to be praised."

Halifax

" It would now be esteemed no honour, by a contributor to the monthly bundles of verses, to be told, that, in strains either familiar or solemn, he sings like Montague."

Stepney

" He apparently professed himself a poet, and added his name to those of the other wits in the version of Juvenal ; but he is a very licentious translator, and does not recom-

pense his neglect of the author by beauties of his own. In his original poems, now and then, a happy line may perhaps be found, and now and then a short composition may give pleasure. But there is in the whole little either of the grace of wit, or the vigour of nature."

Hughes

"The character of his genius I shall transcribe from the correspondence of *Swift* and *Pope*.

"'A month ago,' says Swift, 'was sent me over, by a friend of mine, the works of *John Hughes*, Esquire. They are in prose and verse. I never heard of the man in my life, yet I find your name as a subscriber. He is too great a poet for me; and I think among the *mediocrists*, in prose as well as verse.'

"To this Pope returns: 'To answer your question as to Mr. *Hughes*; what he wanted in genius, he made up as an honest man; but he was of the class you think him.'"

As it was thought necessary to admit men of such slender pretensions into such very reputable society, it seems natural to expect that some reason had been given for shewing them a distinction which has been denied to Sedley, Marvel, and above all to the immortal Spenser.

To the foregoing extracts we shall add a passage or two relating to Butler, from the second volume. This author was, by some accident, omitted in our former Articles.

Butler

Of the great author of Hudibras few anecdotes are handed down to us, and of those few not many are authentic. We learn from his present biographer, that a life prefixed to the later edition of his poems by an unknown writer, and the account which is incidentally given by Wood, who confesses the uncertainty of his own narrative, are all the materials that are now to be collected for composing the history of this singular poet. Curiosity naturally wishes for some farther knowledge of him: and yet, were curiosity to be gratified, it is to be feared there would be little to relate that humanity could look upon with pleasure. For what could be expected, even from the most circum-

stantial narrative of the life of this unfortunate writer, but a more faithful exhibition of genius struggling with penury and dependence, an ampler detail of the pangs of disappointed expectation, joined to the melancholy display of unrewarded labours and royal ingratitude? Let us turn off our attention from the author to his work.

"The poem of Hudibras is one of those compositions of which a nation may justly boast; as the images which it exhibits are domestic, the sentiments unborrowed and unexpected, and the strain of diction original and peculiar. We must not, however, suffer the pride which we assume as the countrymen of Butler to make any encroachment upon justice, nor appropriate those honours which others have a right to share. The poem of Hudibras is not wholly English; the original idea is to be found in the history of Don Quixote; a book to which a mind of the greatest powers may be indebted without disgrace."

Dr. Johnson very justly accounts for much of that humour which transported the last century with merriment being lost upon us, "who do not know the sour solemnity, the sullen superstition, the gloomy moroseness, and the stubborn scruples of the ancient Puritans; or, if we know them, derive our information only from books or from tradition.

"We have never, says he, been witnesses of animosities excited by the use of minced pies and plum porridge; nor seen with what abhorrence those who could eat them at all other times of the year would shrink from them in December. An old Puritan, who was alive in my childhood, being at one of the feasts of the church invited by a neighbour to partake his cheer, told him, that, if he would treat him at an alehouse with beer, brewed for all times and seasons, he should accept his kindness, but would have none of his superstitious meats or drinks.

"One of the puritanical tenets was the illegality of all games of chance; and he that reads Gataker upon *Lots*, may see how much learning and reason one of the first scholars of his age thought necessary, to prove that it was no crime to throw a die, or play at cards, or to hide a shilling for the reckoning."

The arguments he produces to prove that were another Butler to arise, another Hudibras would not obtain the same regard, seem to be conclusive:

"Burlesque, says he, consists in a disproportion between the style and the sentiments, or between the adventitious sentiments and the fundamental subject. It therefore, like all bodies compounded of heterogeneous parts, contains in it a principle of corruption. All disproportion is unnatural, and from what is unnatural we can derive only the pleasure which novelty produces. We admire it awhile as a strange thing; but, when it is no longer strange, we perceive its deformity. It is a kind of artifice, which by frequent repetition detects itself; and the reader, learning in time what he is to expect, lays down his book, as the spectator turns away from a second exhibition of those tricks, of which the only use is to shew that they can be played."

Aug. 1781 Vol. 65 p. 100.[1]

It is observed by Dr. Johnson, that the promises of authors are like the vows of lovers. Happy for the republic of letters he has not, by his own conduct, exemplified the observation. In the six additional volumes of his Biographical Prefaces, which we are now entering upon, he has amply fulfilled his engagements to the Public. Of these, the first contains the lives of Addison, Blackmore, and Sheffield: the second, those of Granville, Rowe, Tickel, Congreve, Fenton, and Prior: the third is dedicated entirely to Pope: the fourth belongs to Swift, Gay, Broome, Pitt, Parnell, A. Philips, and Watts: the fifth to Savage, Somervile, Thomson, Hammond, and Collins: in the concluding volume are the lives of Young, Dyer, Mallet, Shenstone, Akenside, Lyttelton, West, and Gray.

Addison's life and personal character are well known, and his present Biographer, concurring with those who have preceded him, bears testimony to the goodness of both. Of his literary character there are parts on which the critics have been divided. Our Readers will not be displeased to see what Dr. Johnson's sentiments are on this agitated question.

[1] With these are likewise published a comprehensive poetical Index, in two volumes, of the same size with the Poets.

"Addison, in his life, and for some time afterwards, was considered by the greater part of readers as supremely excelling both in poetry and criticism. Part of his reputation may be probably ascribed to the advancement of his fortune; when, as Swift observes, he became a statesman, and saw poets waiting at his levee, it is no wonder that praise was accumulated upon him. Much likewise may be more honourably ascribed to his personal character; he who, if he had claimed it, might have obtained the diadem, was not likely to be denied the laurel.

"But time quickly puts an end to artificial and accidental fame, and Addison is to pass through futurity protected only by his genius. Every name which kindness or interest once raised too high, is in danger, lest the next age should, by the vengeance of criticism, sink it in the same proportion. A great writer has lately stiled him *an indifferent poet, and a worse critic.*

"His poetry is first to be considered; of which it must be confessed that it has not often those felicities of diction which give lustre to sentiments, or that vigour of sentiment that animates diction: there is little of ardour, vehemence, or transport; there is very rarely the awfulness of grandeur, and not very often the splendour of elegance. He thinks justly; but he thinks faintly. This is his general character, to which, doubtless, many single passages will furnish exceptions.

"Yet if he seldom reaches supreme excellence, he rarely sinks into dulness, and is still more rarely entangled in absurdity. He did not trust his powers enough to be negligent. There is in most of his compositions a calmness and equability deliberate and cautious, sometimes with little that delights, but seldom with any thing that offends.

"Of this kind seem to be his poems to Dryden, to Somers, and to the King. His ode on St. Cecilia has been imitated by Pope, and has something in it of Dryden's vigour. Of his Account of the English Poets, he used to speak as a *poor thing* [1]; but it is not worse than his usual

[1] Spence.

strain. He has said, not very judiciously, in his character of Waller:

> Thy verse could shew ev'n Cromwell's innocence,
> And compliment the storms that bore him hence.
> O! had thy Muse not come an age too soon,
> But seen great Nassau on the British throne,
> How had his triumph glitter'd in thy page—

What is this but to say that he who could compliment Cromwell had been the proper poet for King William? Addison however never printed the piece.

"The Letter from Italy has been always praised, but has never been praised beyond its merit. It is more correct, with less appearance of labour, and more elegant, with less ambition of ornament, than any other of his poems. There is however one broken metaphor, of which notice may properly be taken:

> Fir'd with that name—
> I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain,
> That longs to launch into a nobler strain.

To *bridle* a *goddess* is no very delicate idea; but why must she be *bridled*? because she *longs to launch*; an act which was never hindered by a *bridle*; and whither will she *launch?* into a *nobler strain.* She is in the first line a *horse*, in the second a *boat*; and the care of the poet is to keep his *horse* or his *boat* from *singing.*

"The next composition is the far-famed Campaign, which Dr. Warton has termed a *Gazette in Rhyme*, with harshness not often used by the good-nature of his criticism. Before a censure so severe is admitted, let us consider that War is a frequent subject of Poetry, and then enquire who has described it with more justness and force. Many of our own writers tried their powers upon this year of victory, yet Addison's is confessedly the best performance; his poem is the work of a man not blinded by the dust of learning; his images are not borrowed merely from books. The superiority which he confers upon his hero is not personal prowess, and *mighty bone*, but deliberate intrepidity, a calm command of his passions, and the power of consulting his own mind in the midst of danger. The rejection and contempt of fiction is rational and manly."—

"The tragedy of Cato, which, contrarily to the rule observed in selecting the works of other poets, has by the weight of its character forced its way into this collection, is unquestionably the noblest production of Addison's genius. Of a work so much read, it is difficult to say any thing new. About things on which the Public thinks long, it commonly attains to think right; and of Cato it has been not unjustly determined, that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language than a representation of natural affections, or of any state probable or possible in human life. Nothing here *excites or asswages emotion*; here is *no magical power of raising phantastic terror or wild anxiety.* The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow. Of the agents we have no care: we consider not what they are doing, or what they are suffering; we wish only to know what they have to say. Cato is a being above our solicitude; a man of whom the gods take care, and whom we leave to their care with heedless confidence. To the rest neither gods nor men can have much attention; for there is not one amongst them that strongly attracts either affection or esteem. But they are made the vehicles of such sentiments and such expression, that there is scarcely a scene in the play which the reader does not wish to impress upon his memory.

"When Cato was shewn to Pope,[1] he advised the author to print it without any theatrical exhibition, supposing that it would be read more favourably than heard. Addison declared himself of the same opinion; but urged the importunity of his friends for its appearance on the stage. The emulation of parties made it successful beyond expectation, and its success has introduced or confirmed among us the use of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffecting elegance, and chill philosophy.

"The universality of applause, however it might quell the censure of common morals, had no other effect than to harden Dennis in fixed dislike; but his dislike was not merely capricious. He found and shewed many faults:

[1] Spence.

he shewed them indeed with anger, but he found them with acuteness, such as ought to rescue his criticism from oblivion; though, at last, it will have no other life than it derives from the work which it endeavours to oppress."—

"Of Addison's smaller poems, no particular mention is necessary; they have little that can employ or require a critic. The parallel of the Princes and Gods, in his verses to Kneller, is often happy, but is too well known to be quoted.

"His translations, so far as I have compared them, want the exactness of a scholar. That he understood his authors cannot be doubted; but his versions will not teach others to understand them, being too licentiously paraphrastical. They are, however, for the most part, smooth and easy; and, what is the first excellence of a translator, such as may be read with pleasure by those who do not know the originals.

"His poetry is polished and pure; the product of a mind too judicious to commit faults, but not sufficiently vigorous to attain excellence. He has sometimes a striking line, or a shining paragraph; but in the whole he is warm rather than fervid, and shews more dexterity than strength. He was however one of our earliest examples of correctness.

"The versification which he had learned from Dryden, he debased rather than refined. His rhymes are often dissonant; in his Georgic he admits broken lines. He uses both triplets and alexandrines; but triplets more frequently in his translations than his other works. The mere structure of verses seems never to have engaged much of his care. But his lines are very smooth in Rosamond, and too smooth in Cato.

"Addison is now to be considered as a Critic; a name which the present generation is scarcely willing to allow him. His criticism is condemned as tentative or experimental, rather than scientific, and he is considered as deciding by taste rather than by principles.

"It is not uncommon for those who have grown wise by the labour of others to add a little of their own, and overlook their masters. Addison is now despised by some, who perhaps would never have seen his defects but by the

lights which he afforded them. That he always wrote as he would think it necessary to write now, cannot be affirmed; his instructions were such as the character of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk was in his time rarely to be found. Men not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance; and in the female world any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured. His purpose was to infuse literary curiosity, by gentle and unsuspected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy; he therefore presented knowledge in the most alluring form, not lofty and austere, but accessible and familiar. When he shewed them their defects, he shewed them likewise that they might be easily supplied. His attempt succeeded; enquiry was awakened, and comprehension expanded. An emulation of intellectual elegance was excited, and from his time to our own life has been gradually exalted, and conversation purified and enlarged.

"Dryden had, not many years before, scattered criticism over his Prefaces with very little parsimony; but, though he sometimes condescended to be somewhat familiar, his manner was in general too scholastic for those who had yet their rudiments to learn, and found it not easy to understand their master. His observations were framed rather for those that were learning to write, than for those that read only to talk.

"An instructor like Addison was now wanting, whose remarks being superficial, might be easily understood, and being just, might prepare the mind for more attainments. Had he presented *Paradise Lost* to the public with all the pomp of system and severity of science, he would perhaps have been admired, and the book still have been neglected; but by the blandishments of gentleness and facility, he has made Milton an universal favourite, with whom readers of every class think it necessary to be pleased.

"He descended now and then to lower disquisitions, and by a serious display of the beauties of *Chevy Chase* exposed himself to the ridicule of Wagstaff, who bestowed a like pompous character on *Tom Thumb*; and to the

contempt of Dennis, who, considering the fundamental position of his criticism, that *Chevy Chase* pleases, and ought to please, because it is natural, observes, 'that there is a way of deviating from nature by bombast or tumour, which soars above nature, and enlarges images beyond their real bulk; by affectation, which forsakes nature in quest of something unsuitable; and by imbecility, which degrades nature by faintness and diminution, by obscuring images, and weakening effects. In *Chevy Chase* there is not much of either bombast or affectation; but there is chill and lifeless imbecility. The story cannot possibly be told in a manner that shall make less impression on the mind.'

"Before the profound observers of the present race repose too securely on the consciousness of their superiority to Addison, let them consider his Remarks on Ovid, in which may be found specimens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined; let them peruse likewise his Essays on *Wit*, and on the *Pleasures of Imagination*, in which he founds art on the base of nature, and draws the principles of invention from dispositions inherent in the mind of man, with skill and elegance, such as his contemners will not easily attain.

"As a describer of life and manners, he must be allowed to stand perhaps the first of the first rank. His humour, which, as Steele observes, is peculiar to himself, is so happily diffused, as to give the grace of novelty to domestic scenes and daily occurrences. He never *outsteps the modesty of nature*, nor raises merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by distortion, nor amaze by aggravation. He copies life with so much fidelity, that he can be hardly said to invent; yet his exhibitions have an air so much original, that it is difficult to suppose them not merely the product of imagination.

"As a teacher of wisdom he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthusiastic or superstitious: he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly sceptical; his morality is neither dangerously lax, nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy, and all

the cogency of argument, are employed to recommend to the reader his real interest, the care of pleasing the Author of his being. Truth is shewn sometimes as the phantom of a vision, sometimes appears half veiled in an allegory; sometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy, and sometimes steps forth in the confidence of reason. She wears a thousand dresses, and in all is pleasing.

Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.

"His prose is the model of the middle stile; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not grovelling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendor.

"It seems to have been his principal endeavour to avoid all harshness and severity of diction; he is therefore sometimes verbose in his transitions and connections, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation; yet if his language had been less idiomatical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine Anglicism. What he attempted, he performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetic; he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude, nor affected brevity: his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an English stile, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

Those who know nothing of Blackmore's poetical accomplishments but what is to be collected from the ludicrous representations of contemporary wits, will wonder how he obtained his present exalted station among the English poets. But if the opinion of Dr. Johnson, the rescuer of his fame, may be trusted to, that wonder will cease.

In the former part of his life, Blackmore was a physician of high eminence and extensive practice, and therefore was made a poet not by necessity, but inclination. He

does not appear to have been known as a maker of verses till he was seven or eight and forty. His first publication was Prince Arthur, an heroic poem in ten books. This work must have been very generally read, as it ran through three editions in two years; "a very uncommon instance of favourable reception, it is remarked, at a time when literary curiosity was yet confined to particular classes of the nation." In two years afterwards, he fabricated another heroic poem, under the title of King Arthur, in twelve books. Besides these, and other poems of considerable length, he produced two more heroic poems, in which he attempted to immortalize Queen Elizabeth and King Alfred. "Of his four epic poems," we are told, "that the first had such reputation and popularity as enraged the critics; the second was at least known enough to be ridiculed; the two last had neither friends nor enemies."

His labours were not solely confined to poetry; he was equally voluminous in physic and theology. As a writer, whatever other praise might be denied him, he certainly was entitled to that of great diligence, or wonderful facility.

The poem that has gained him admittance into this Collection, is *Creation*; which, if he had written nothing else, would, in the opinion of his Biographer, have transmitted him to posterity among the first favourites of the English Muse. What its particular merits are, we are told in the course of Sir Richard's poetical character, which, if not justly, is at least very ingeniously drawn.

"Blackmore, by the unremitted enmity of the wits, whom he provoked more by his virtue than his dulness, has been exposed to worse treatment than he deserved; his name was so long used to point every epigram upon dull writers, that it became at last a byeword of contempt: but it deserves observation, that malignity takes hold only of his writings, and that his life passed without reproach, even when his boldness of reprehension naturally turned upon him many eyes desirous to espy faults, which many tongues would have made haste to publish. But those who could not blame, could at least forbear to praise;

and therefore of his private life and domestic character there are no memorials.

"As an Author he may justly claim the honours of magnanimity. The incessant attacks of his enemies, whether serious or merry, are never discovered to have disturbed his quiet, or to have lessened his confidence in himself; they neither awed him to silence nor to caution; they neither provoked him to petulance, nor depressed him to complaint. While the distributors of literary fame were endeavouring to depreciate and degrade him, he either despised or defied them, wrote on as he had written before, and never turned aside to quiet them by civility, or repress them by confutation.

"He depended with great security on his own powers, and perhaps was for that reason less diligent in perusing books. His literature was, I think, but small. What he knew of antiquity, I suspect him to have gathered from modern compilers; but though he could not boast of much critical knowledge, his mind was stored with general principles, and he left minute researches to those whom he considered as little minds.

"With this disposition he wrote most of his poems. Having formed a magnificent design, he was careless of particular and subordinate elegancies; he studied no niceties of versification; he waited for no felicities of fancy; but caught his first thoughts in the first words in which they were presented: nor does it appear that he saw beyond his own performances, or had ever elevated his views to that ideal perfection, which every genius born to excel is condemned always to pursue, and never overtake. In the first suggestions of his imagination he acquiesced; he thought them good, and did not seek for better.

"The poem on *Creation* has, however, the appearance of more circumspection; it wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of thought, nor elegance of diction: it has either been written with great care, or, what cannot be imagined of so long a work, with such felicity as made care less necessary.

"Its two constituent parts are ratiocination and description. To reason in verse is allowed to be difficult;

but Blackmore not only reasons in verse, but very often reasons poetically; and finds the art of uniting ornament with strength, and ease with closeness. This is a skill which Pope might have condescended to learn from him, when he needed it so much in his Moral Essays.

"In his descriptions, both of life and nature, the poet and the philosopher happily co-operate; truth is recommended by elegance, and elegance sustained by truth.

"In the structure and order of the poem, not only the greater parts are properly consecutive, but the didactic and illustrative paragraphs are so happily mingled, that labour is relieved by pleasure, and the attention is led on through a long succession of varied excellence to the original position, the fundamental principle of wisdom and of virtue."

The most remarkable circumstance in the life of Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, is, that "at an age not exceeding twelve years he resolved to educate himself. Such a purpose, formed at such an age, and successfully prosecuted, delights as it is strange, and instructs as it is real." And his biographer adds, his literary acquisitions are "more wonderful, as the years in which they are commonly made were spent in the tumult of a military life, or the gaiety of a court."

As a poet he might have been excluded from this Collection without much injury to his claims. He is a writer, says Dr. Johnson (and we agree with him) that "sometimes glimmers, but rarely shines, feebly laborious, and at best but pretty. His songs are upon common topics; he hopes, and grieves, and repents, and despairs, and rejoices, like any other maker of little stanzas: to be great he hardly tries; to be gay is hardly in his power."

As little does the noble author who comes next to him seem to merit his present elevation.

"Granville was a man illustrious by his birth, and therefore attracted notice: since he is by Pope stiled *the polite*, he must be supposed elegant in his manners, and generally loved: he was, in times of contest and turbulence, steady to his party, and obtained that esteem which is always conferred upon firmness and consistency. With those

advantages, having learned the art of versifying, he declared himself a poet; and his claim to the laurel was allowed.

"But by a critic of a later generation, who takes up his book without any favourable prejudices, the praise already received will be thought sufficient; for his works do not shew him to have had much comprehension from nature, or illumination from learning. He seems to have had no ambition above the imitation of Waller, of whom he has copied the faults, and very little more. He is for ever amusing himself with the puerilities of mythology; his King is Jupiter, who, if the Queen brings no children, has a barren Juno. The Queen is compounded of Juno, Venus, and Minerva. His poem on the Duchess of Grafton's law-suit, after having rattled awhile with Juno and Pallas, Mars and Alcides, Cassiope, Niobe, and the Propetides, Hercules, Minos, and Rhadamanthus, at last concludes its folly with profaneness.

"His verses to Mira, which are most frequently mentioned, have little in them of either art or nature, of the sentiments of a lover, or the language of a poet: there may be found, now-and-then, a happier effort; but they are commonly feeble and unaffecting, or forced and extravagant.

"His little pieces are seldom either spritely or elegant, keen or weighty. They are trifles, written by idleness, and published by vanity. But his Prologues and Epilogues have a just claim to praise.

"The *Progress of Beauty* seems one of his most elaborate pieces, and is not deficient in splendor and gaiety; but the merit of original thought is wanting. Its highest praise is the spirit with which he celebrates King James's consort, when she was a Queen no longer.

The *Essay on unnatural Flights in Poetry*, is not inelegant nor injudicious, and has something of vigour beyond most of his other performances: his precepts are just, and his cautions proper; they are indeed not new, but in a didactic poem novelty is to be expected only in the ornaments and illustrations. His poetical precepts are accompanied with agreeable and instructive notes, which ought not to have been omitted in this edition.

"The Masque of *Peleus and Thetis* has here and there a pretty line; but it is not always melodious, and the conclusion is wretched.

"In his *British Enchanters* he has bidden defiance to all chronology, by confounding the inconsistent manners of different ages; but the dialogue has often the air of Dryden's rhyming plays; and the songs are lively, though not very correct. This is, I think, far the best of his works; for, if it has many faults, it has likewise passages which are at least pretty, though they do not rise to any high degree of excellence."

We come now to a more respectable name. In the life of Rowe, the only part that can be expected to interest us is that which relates to his literary character. The anecdotes that are known of him are few, and those few are such as give little scope for amplification or embellishment.

His merits as a writer are estimated with judgment and candour.

"Rowe is chiefly to be considered as a tragic writer, and a translator. In his attempt at comedy he failed so ignominiously, that his *Biter* is not inserted in his works; and his occasional poems and short compositions are rarely worthy of either praise or censure; for they seem the casual sports of a mind seeking rather to amuse its leisure than to exercise its powers.

"In the construction of his dramas, there is not much art; he is not a nice observer of the Unities. He extends time and varies place as his convenience requires. To vary the place is not, in my opinion, any violation of Nature, if the change be made between the acts; for it is no less easy for the spectator to suppose himself at Athens in the second act, than at Thebes in the first; but to change the scene, as is done by Rowe in the middle of an act, is to add more acts to the play, since an act is so much of the business as is transacted without interruption. Rowe, by this licence, easily extricates himself from difficulties; as in *Jane Grey*, when we have been terrified with all the dreadful pomp of public execution, and are wondering how the heroine or the poet will proceed, no sooner has

Jane pronounced some prophetic rhymes, than—pass and be gone—the scene closes, and *Pembroke* and *Gardiner* are turned out upon the stage.

"I know not that there can be found in his plays any deep search into nature, any accurate discriminations of kindred qualities, or nice display of passion in its progress; all is general and undefined. Nor does he much interest or affect the auditor, except in *Jane Shore*, who is always seen and heard with pity. *Alicia* is a character of empty noise, with no resemblance to real sorrow, or to natural madness.

"Whence, then, has Rowe his reputation? From the reasonableness and propriety of some of his scenes, from the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse. He seldom moves either pity or terror, but he often elevates the sentiments; he seldom pierces the breast, but he always delights the ear, and often improves the understanding.

"His translation of the *Golden Verses*, and of the first book of Quillet's Poem, have nothing in them remarkable. The *Golden Verses* are tedious. The version of *Lucan* is one of the greatest productions of English poetry; for there is, perhaps, none that so completely exhibits the genius and spirit of the original. *Lucan* is distinguished by a kind of dictatorial or philosophic dignity, rather, as Quintilian observes, declamatory than poetical; full of ambitious morality and pointed sentences, comprised in vigorous and animated lines. This character Rowe has very diligently and successfully preserved. His versification, which is such as his contemporaries practised, without any attempt at innovation or improvement, seldom wants either melody or force. His author's sense is sometimes a little diluted by additional infusions, and sometimes weakened by too much expansion. But such faults are to be expected in all translations, from the constraint of measures and dissimilitude of languages. The *Pharsalia* of Rowe deserves more notice than it obtains, and as it is more read will be more esteemed."

To Tickel, the celebrated friend of Addison, cannot be refused, as Dr. Johnson justly observes, a high place among

the minor poets. From him, however, we must pass on to a more popular name.

Of the four first dramas of Congreve it is observed, that "whatever objections may be made either to his comic or tragic excellence, they are lost at once in the blaze of admiration, when it is remembered, that he had produced these four plays before he had passed his twenty-fifth year; before other men, even such as are some time to shine in eminence, have passed their probation of literature, or presume to hope for any other notice than such as is bestowed on diligence and inquiry. Among all the efforts of early genius which literary history records, I doubt whether any one can be produced, that more surpasses the common limits of nature than the plays of Congreve."

In the course of this narrative, Dr. Johnson introduces a lively and entertaining account of the celebrated controversy on the immorality and prophaneness of the English stage. If the merit of an action be estimated by the arduousness of the attempt, or the importance of the object, the man who, in opposition to wit, ridicule, and the depraved passions of mankind, is able to reform one article of the national taste, is certainly entitled to high praise. This praise is Collier's.

"About this time began the long-continued controversy between Collier and the poets. In the reign of Charles the First the Puritans had raised a violent clamour against the drama, which they considered as an entertainment not lawful to Christians, an opinion held by them in common with the church of Rome; and Prynne published *Histriomastix*, a huge volume, in which stage-plays were censured. The outrages and crimes of the Puritans brought afterwards their whole system of doctrine into disrepute, and from the Restoration the poets and the players were left at quiet; for to have molested them would have had the appearance of tendency to puritanical malignity.

"This danger, however, was worn away by time; and Collier, a fierce and implacable Nonjuror, knew that an attack upon the theatre would never make him suspected for a Puritan; he therefore (1698) published *A short View*

of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage, I believe with no other motive than religious zeal and honest indignation. He was formed for a controvertist; with sufficient learning; with diction vehement and pointed, though often vulgar and incorrect; with unconquerable pertinacity; with wit in the highest degree keen and sarcastic; and with all those powers, exalted and invigorated by just confidence in his cause.

"Thus qualified, and thus incited, he walked out to battle, and assailed at once most of the living writers, from Dryden to D'Urfey. His onset was violent: those passages, which while they stood single had passed with little notice, when they were accumulated and exposed together, excited horror; the wise and the pious caught the alarm, and the nation wondered why it had so long suffered irreligion and licentiousness to be openly taught at the public charge.

"Nothing now remained for the poets but to resist or fly. Dryden's conscience, or his prudence, angry as he was, withheld him from the conflict; Congreve and Vanbrugh attempted answers. Congreve, a very young man, elated with success, and impatient of censure, assumed an air of confidence and security. His chief artifice of controversy is to retort upon his adversary his own words: he is very angry, and hoping to conquer Collier with his own weapons, allows himself in the use of every term of contumely and contempt; but he has the sword without the arm of Scanderbeg; he has his antagonist's coarseness, but not his strength. Collier replied; for contest was his delight, he was not to be frighted from his purpose or his prey.

"The cause of Congreve was not tenable: whatever glosses he might use for the defence or palliation of single passages, the general tenour and tendency of his plays must always be condemned. It is acknowledged, with universal conviction, that the perusal of his works will make no man better; and that their ultimate effect is, to represent pleasure in alliance with vice, and to relax those obligations by which life ought to be regulated.

"The stage found other advocates, and the dispute

was protracted through ten years; but at last Comedy grew more modest, and Collier lived to see the reward of his labour in the reformation of the theatre."

Time, that determines all things, has settled the character of Congreve as a dramatist; and Dr. Johnson concurs with the general opinion. But when he speaks of his miscellaneous poetry, he observes, that "the powers of Congreve seem to desert him when he leaves the stage, as Antæus was no longer strong than he could touch the ground. It cannot be observed without wonder, that a mind so vigorous and fertile in dramatic compositions should on any other occasion discover nothing but impotence and poverty. He has in these little pieces neither elevation of fancy, selection of language, nor skill in versification: yet if I were required to select from the whole mass of English poetry the most poetical paragraph, I know not what I could prefer to an exclamation in *The Mourning Bride*:

Almeria. It was a fancy'd noise; for all is hush'd.
Leonora. It bore the accent of a human voice.
Almeria. It was thy fear, or else some transient wind
Whistling thro' hollows of this vaulted isle:
We'll listen—
Leonora. Hark!
Almeria. No, all is hush'd, and still as death.—'Tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pile;
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
Looking tranquillity! It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chilness to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.

"He who reads those lines enjoys for a moment the powers of a poet; he feels what he remembers to have felt before, but he feels it with great increase of sensibility; he recognises a familiar image, but meets it again amplified and expanded, embellished with beauty, and enlarged with majesty.

"Yet could the author, who appears here to have

enjoyed the confidence of Nature, lament the death of Queen Mary in lines like these :

> The rocks are cleft, and new descending rills
> Furrow the brows of all th' impending hills.
> The water-gods to floods their rivulets turn,
> And each, with streaming eyes, supplies his wanting urn,
> The Fawns forsake the woods, the Nymphs the grove,
> And round the plain in sad distractions rove ;
> In prickly brakes their tender limbs they tear,
> And leave on thorns their locks of golden hair.
> With their sharp nails themselves the Satyrs wound,
> And tug their shaggy beards, and bite with grief the ground.
> Lo Pan himself, beneath a blasted oak,
> Dejected lies, his pipe in pieces broke.
> See Pales weeping too, in wild despair,
> And to the piercing winds her bosom bare.
> And see yon fading myrtle, where appears
> The Queen of Love, all bath'd in flowing tears ;
> See how she wrings her hands, and beats her breast,
> And tears her useless girdle from her waist :
> Hear the sad murmurs of her sighing doves !
> For grief they sigh, forgetful of their loves.

And many years after he gave no proof that time had improved his wisdom or his wit ; for on the death of the Marquis of Blandford this was his song :

> And now the winds, which had so long been still,
> Began the swelling air with sighs to fill :
> The water-nymphs, who motionless remain'd,
> Like images of ice, while she complain'd,
> Now loos'd their streams ; as when descending rains
> Roll the steep torrents headlong o'er the plains.
> The prone creation, who so long had gaz'd,
> Charm'd with her cries, and at her griefs amaz'd,
> Began to roar and howl with horrid yell,
> Dismal to hear, and terrible to tell ;
> Nothing but groans and sighs were heard around,
> And Echo multiplied each mournful sound.

In both these funeral poems, when he has *yelled* out many *syllables* of senseless *dolour*, he dismisses his reader with senseless consolation : from the grave of Pastora rises a light that forms a star ; and where Amaryllis wept for Amyntas, from every tear sprung up a violet."—

" While comedy, or while tragedy is regarded, his plays are likely to be read ; but, except what relates to the stage, I know not that he has ever written a stanza that is

sung, or a couplet that is quoted. The general character of his Miscellanies is, that they shew little wit, and little virtue.

"Yet to him it must be confessed that we are indebted for the correction of a national error, and the cure of our Pindaric madness. He first taught the English writers that Pindar's odes were regular; and though certainly he had not the fire requisite for the higher species of lyric poetry, he has shewn us that enthusiasm has its rules, and that in mere confusion there is neither grace nor greatness."

We are next introduced to the amiable Fenton, one of the coadjutors of Pope in translating the Odyssey. The books which fell to Fenton's share were the first, the fourth, the nineteenth, and the twentieth. How he and his associate Broome performed their parts is, as this Biographer remarks, well known to the Readers of poetry, who have never been able to distinguish their books from those of Pope. From his share in this work, and his tragedy of Mariamne, he chiefly derives his poetical fame. He was an inoffensive, indolent man; an excellent versifier, and a good poet.

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In characterising the poetry of Matthew Prior, Dr. Johnson, in more instances than one, deviates from the general opinion of its excellence. Many circumstances, indeed, concurred to elevate Prior's poetical character higher than its intrinsic merit alone would possibly have raised it. The single circumstance of his exaltation (which was always considered, as in fact it was, the consequence of literary attainments), by speedy gradations from the station of a tavern-boy to the rank of an ambassador, would naturally impress the world with an idea of very uncommon superiority. Prior's works are considered as composing Tales, Love-verses, Occasional Poems, Alma, and Solomon. "His Tales are written with great familiarity and great spriteliness: the language is easy, but seldom gross, and the numbers are smooth, without the appearance of care." But it is a doubt with Dr. Johnson, whether he be the original author of any tale which he has given us,

On his Love-verses the critic is particularly severe; and, if one or two pieces be excepted, justly so. And even in those, it is wit and gallantry, rather than passion, that entitles them to notice. A man, like Prior, connecting himself with drabs of the lowest species, must be incapable of feeling either the warmth of a true passion, or the refinements of an elegant one.

"In his Amorous Effusions he is less happy; for they are not dictated by nature or by passion, and have neither gallantry nor tenderness. They have the coldness of Cowley, without his wit; the dull exercises of a skilful versifyer, resolved at all adventures to write something about Chloe, and trying to be amorous by dint of study. His fictions therefore are mythological. Venus, after the example of the Greek Epigram, asks when she was seen *naked and bathing.* Then Cupid is *mistaken*; then Cupid is *disarmed*; then he loses his darts to *Ganymede*; then *Jupiter* sends him a summons by *Mercury.* Then *Chloe* goes a-hunting, with an *ivory quiver graceful at her side*; Diana mistakes her for one of her nymphs, and Cupid laughs at the blunder. All this is surely despicable; and even when he tries to act the lover, without the help of gods or goddesses, his thoughts are unaffecting or remote. He talks not *like a man of this world.*

"The greatest of all his amorous essays is *Henry* and *Emma;* a dull and tedious dialogue, which excites neither esteem for the man, nor tenderness for the woman. The example of Emma, who resolves to follow an outlawed murderer wherever fear and guilt shall drive him, deserves no imitation; and the experiment by which Henry tries the lady's constancy, is such as must end either in infamy to her, or in disappointment to himself."

That Dr. Johnson's objections to the scope and tendency of the last mentioned poem are just, no one will, we presume, be hardy enough to dispute; but it is at the same time much to be doubted whether many will agree with him in thinking it a dull and tedious dialogue. Were the question to be asked, which of Prior's poems has been most generally read? we are of opinion, it would be deter-

mined in favour of Henry and Emma. What every one reads can hardly be thought tedious and dull.

Dr. Johnson is of opinion, that all that is valuable in this writer is owing to his diligence and judgment. "His diligence," says he, "has justly placed him amongst the most correct of the English poets; and he was one of the first that resolutely endeavoured at correctness. He never sacrifices accuracy to haste, nor indulges himself in contemptuous negligence, or impatient idleness; he has no careless lines, or entangled sentiments; his words are nicely selected, and his thoughts fully expanded. If this part of his character suffers any abatement, it must be from the disproportion of his rhymes, which have not always sufficient consonance, and from the admission of broken lines into his *Solomon*; but perhaps he thought, like Cowley, that hemistichs ought to be admitted into heroic poetry.

"He had apparently such rectitude of judgment as secured him from every thing that approached to the ridiculous or absurd; but as laws operate in civil agency not to the excitement of virtue, but the repression of wickedness; so judgment, in the operations of intellect, can hinder faults, but not produce excellence. Prior is never low, nor very often sublime. It is said by Longinus of Euripides, that he forces himself sometimes into grandeur by violence of effort, as the lion kindles his fury by the lashes of his own tail. Whatever Prior obtains above mediocrity seems the effort of struggle and of toil. He has many vigorous, but few happy lines; he has every thing by purchase, and nothing by gift; he had no *nightly visitations* of the Muse, no infusions of sentiment or felicities of fancy.

"His diction, however, is more his own than that of any among the successors of Dryden; he borrows no lucky turns, or commodious modes of language, from his predecessors. His phrases are original, but they are sometimes harsh; as he inherited no elegances, none has he bequeathed. His expression has every mark of laborious study; the line seldom seems to have been formed at once; the words did not come till they were called, and were then

put by constraint into their places, where they do their duty, but do it sullenly. In his greater compositions there may be found more rigid stateliness than graceful dignity."

The concluding observation is striking and just:

"A survey of the life and writings of Prior may exemplify a sentence which he doubtless understood well, when he read Horace at his uncle's; *the vessel long retains the scent which it first receives.* In his private relaxation he revived the tavern, and in his amorous pedantry he exhibited the college. But on higher occasions, and nobler subjects, when habit was overpowered by the necessity of reflection, he wanted not wisdom as a statesman, nor elegance as a poet."

We are now arrived at a character, which, as a poet, Dr. Johnson seems to have contemplated with singular complacency. As it comes not within the compass or design of this Article to attend the Biographer through all the minutiæ of Pope's life, with which, indeed, the Public is sufficiently acquainted, we shall only touch upon those parts which are connected with his literary history. Perhaps the most interesting part is that where he commences his Translation of Homer.

"The next year (1713) produced a bolder attempt, by which profit was sought as well as praise. The poems which he had hitherto written, however they might have diffused his name, had made very little addition to his fortune. The allowance which his father made him, though, proportioned to what he had, it might be liberal, could not be large; his religion hindered him from the occupation of any civil employment, and he complained that he wanted even money to buy books.

"He therefore resolved to try how far the favour of the Public extended, by soliciting a subscription to a version of the *Iliad*, with large notes."—

"Pope, having now emitted his proposals, and engaged not only his own reputation, but in some degree that of his friends who patronised his subscription, began to be frighted at his own undertaking; and finding himself at first embarrassed with difficulties, which retarded and

oppressed him, he was for a time timorous and uneasy; had his nights disturbed by dreams of long journeys through unknown ways, and wished, as he said, *that somebody would hang him.*

"This misery, however, was not of long continuance; he grew by degrees more acquainted with Homer's images and expressions, and practice increased his facility of versification. In a short time he represents himself as dispatching regularly fifty verses a day, which would shew him, by an easy computation, the termination of his labour.

"His own diffidence was not his only vexation. He that asks a subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him defame him. He that wants money will rather be thought angry than poor; and he that wishes to save his money, conceals his avarice by his malice. Addison had hinted his suspicion that Pope was too much a Tory; and some of the Tories suspected his principles, because he had contributed to the *Guardian*, which was carried on by *Steele.*

"To those who censured his politics were added enemies yet more dangerous, who called in question his knowledge of Greek, and his qualifications for a translator of Homer. To these he made no public opposition; but in one of his Letters escapes from them as well as he can. At an age like his, for he was not more than twenty-five, with an irregular education, and a course of life of which much seems to have passed in conversation, it is not very likely that he overflowed with Greek. But when he felt himself deficient he sought assistance, and what man of learning would refuse to help him? Minute enquiries into the force of words are less necessary in translating Homer than other poets, because his positions are general, and his representations natural, with very little dependence on local or temporary customs, on those changeable scenes of artificial life, which by mingling original with accidental notions, and crowding the mind with images which time effaces, produce ambiguity in diction, and obscurity in books. To this open display of unadulterated nature it must be ascribed that Homer has fewer passages of doubtful meaning than any other poet either in the learned or in

modern languages. I have read of a man, who being, by his ignorance of Greek, compelled to gratify his curiosity with the Latin printed on the opposite page, declared, that from the rude simplicity of the lines literally rendered, he formed nobler ideas of the Homeric majesty, than from the laboured elegance of polished versions.

"Those literal translations were always at hand, and from them he could always obtain his author's sense with sufficient certainty; and among the readers of Homer, the number is very small of those who find much in the Greek more than in the Latin, except the music of the numbers.

"If more help was wanting, he had the poetical translation of *Eobanus Hessus*, an unwearied writer of Latin verses; he had the French Homers of *La Valterie* and *Dacier*, and the English of *Chapman*, *Hobbes*, and *Ogylby*. With Chapman, whose work, though now totally neglected, seems to have been popular almost to the end of the last century, he had very frequent consultations, and perhaps never translated any passage till he had read his version, which indeed he has been sometimes suspected of using instead of the original.

"Notes were likewise to be provided; for the six volumes would have been very little more than six pamphlets without them. What the mere perusal of the text could suggest, Pope wanted no assistance to collect or methodize; but more was necessary; many pages were to be filled, and learning must supply materials to wit and judgment. Something might be gathered from Dacier; but no man loves to be indebted to his contemporaries, and Dacier was accessible to common readers. Eustathius was therefore necessarily consulted. To read Eustathius, of whose work there was then no Latin version, I suspect Pope, if he had been willing, not to have been able; some other was therefore to be found, who had leisure as well as abilities, and he was doubtless most readily employed who would do much work for little money.

"The history of the notes has never been traced. Broome, in his Preface to his Poems, declares himself the commentator *in part upon the Iliad*; and it appears from

Fenton's Letter, preserved in the Museum, that Broome was at first engaged in consulting Eustathius; but that after a time, whatever was the reason, he desisted: another man of Cambridge was then employed, who soon grew weary of the work; and a third was recommended by *Thirlby*, who is now discovered to have been *Jortin*, a man since well known to the learned world, who complained that Pope, having accepted and approved his performance, never testified any curiosity to see him. The terms which Fenton uses are very mercantile: *I think at first sight that his performance is very commendable, and have sent word for him to finish the 17th book, and to send it with his demands for his trouble. I have here enclosed the specimen; if the rest come before the return, I will keep them till I receive your order.*

"Broome then offered his service a second time, which was probably accepted, as they had afterwards a closer correspondence. Parnell contributed the Life of Homer, which Pope found so harsh, that he took great pains in correcting it; and by his own diligence, with such help as kindness or money could procure him, in somewhat more than five years he completed his version of the *Iliad* with the Notes. He begun it in 1712, his twenty-fifth year, and concluded it in 1718, his thirtieth year."

At the conclusion of this account, which contains many circumstances we were not able to make room for, the Doctor adds, "It cannot be unwelcome to literary curiosity, that I deduce thus minutely the history of the English *Iliad*. It is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen; and its publication must therefore he considered as one of the great events in the annals of Learning."

In a life of Pope his commentator, Warburton, would naturally be introduced. Of this literary character the following is a masterly sketch:

"About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the first ranks of learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited enquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his

imagination, nor clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits were too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him an haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against him the wishes of some who favoured his cause. He seems to have adopted the Roman Emperor's determination, *oderint dum metuant*; he used no allurements of gentle language, but wished to compel rather than persuade.

"His style is copious without selection, and forcible without neatness; he took the words that presented themselves; his diction is coarse and impure, and his sentences are unmeasured."

In summing up the intellectual character of Pope, Dr. Johnson's usual acuteness and discernment have by no means deserted him. "Of his intellectual character," says he, "the constituent and fundamental principle was Good Sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied.

"But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

"To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had

heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditation suggested, but what he had found in other writers that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

"These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life; and however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

"From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered anything that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion, and some little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time.

"He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure: he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it."—

"He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

"Integrity of understanding, and nicety of discernment, were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shewn by the dismission of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented

himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration: when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

"Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his best: he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of his reader, and expecting no indulgence from others, he shewed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

"For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of *Thirty eight;* of which Dodsley told me, that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. 'Every line,' said he, 'was then written twice over; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with every line written twice over a second time.'

"His declaration, that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the *Iliad*, and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the *Essay on Criticism* received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

"In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic,

and who, before he became an author, had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

"Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

"Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer, since Milton, must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is

more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

"This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and enquiry may, perhaps, shew him the reasonableness of my determination."

In the distinct examination of the works of Pope, his Critic professes to pay attention not so much to slight faults or petty beauties, as to the general character and effect of each performance. As a specimen of the execution of this part of the work, we shall lay before our Readers the following critique on the Essay on Man:

"The Essay on Man was a work of great labour and long consideration, but certainly not the happiest of Pope's performances. The subject is perhaps not very proper for poetry, and the poet was not sufficiently master of his subject; metaphysical morality was a new study; he was proud of his acquisitions, and supposing himself master of great secrets, was in haste to teach what he had not learned. Thus he tells us, in the first Epistle, that from the nature of the Supreme Being may be deduced an order of beings such as mankind, because Infinite Excellence can do only what is best. He finds out that *all the question, is whether man be in a wrong place?* Surely if, according to the poet's Leibnitzian reasoning, we may infer that man ought to be, only because he is, we may allow that his place is the right place, because he has it. Supreme Wisdom is not less infallible in disposing than in creating. But what is meant by *somewhere* and *place*, and *wrong place*, it had been vain to ask Pope, who probably had never asked himself.

"Having exalted himself into the chair of wisdom, he tells us much that every man knows, and much that he does not know himself; that we see but little, and that the order of the universe is beyond our comprehension; an opinion not very uncommon; and that there is a chain

of subordinate beings *from infinite to nothing*, of which himself and his readers are equally ignorant. But he gives us one comfort, which, without his help, he supposes unattainable, the position *that though we are fools, yet God is wise.*

"This Essay affords an egregious instance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised. The reader feels his mind full, though he learns nothing; and when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother and his nurse. When these wonder-working sounds sink into sense, and the doctrine of the Essay, disrobed of its ornaments, is left to the powers of its naked excellence, what shall we discover? That we are, in comparison with our Creator, very weak and ignorant; that we do not uphold the chain of existence, and that we could not make one another with more skill than we are made. We may learn yet more; that the arts of human life were copied from the instinctive operations of other animals; that if the world be made for man, it may be said that man was made for geese. To these profound principles of natural knowledge are added some moral instructions equally new; that self-interest, well understood, will produce social concord; that men are mutual gainers by mutual benefits; that evil is sometimes balanced by good; that human advantages are unstable and fallacious, of uncertain duration, and doubtful effects; that our true honour is not to have a great part, but to act it well; that virtue only is our own; and that happiness is always in our power.

"Surely a man of no very comprehensive search, may venture to say that he has heard all this before; but it was never till now recommended by such a blaze of embellishment, or such sweetness of melody. The vigorous contraction of some thoughts, the luxuriant amplification of others, the incidental illustrations, and sometimes the dignity, sometimes the softness of the verses, enchain philosophy, suspend criticism, and oppress judgment by overpowering pleasure.

"This is true of many paragraphs; yet, if I had undertaken to exemplify Pope's felicity of composition before a rigid critic, I should not select the *Essay on Man*; for it contains more lines unsuccessfully laboured, more harshness of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expressed, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength, than will be easily found in all his other works."

Dr. Warton, in his ingenious and entertaining Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, seems to dispute his title to the character of a true poet, at least in the more excellent species of the poetical art. Probably the following was written with an eye to what he and some others have advanced on that subject:

"Pope had, in proportions very nicely adjusted to each other, all the qualities that constitute genius. He had *Invention*, by which new trains of events are formed, and new scenes of imagery displayed, as in the *Rape of the Lock*; or extrinsic and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known subject, as in the *Essay on Criticism*. He had *Imagination*, which strongly impresses on the writer's mind, and enables him to convey to the reader the various forms of nature, incidents of life, and energies of passion, as in his *Eloisa*, *Windsor Forest*, and the *Ethic Epistles*. He had *Judgment*, which selects from life or nature what the present purpose requires, and by separating the essence of things from its concomitants, often makes the representation more powerful than the reality: and he had colours of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with every grace of elegant expression, as when he accommodates his diction to the wonderful multiplicity of Homer's sentiments and descriptions."—

"After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only shew the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us enquire to whom the

voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him: if the writer of the *Iliad* were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of Genius."

Dec. 1781 Vol. 65 p. 408

The eighth volume of this amusing work contains the Lives of Swift, Gay, Broome, Pitt, Parnel, A. Philips, and Watts. As it furnishes little that is new, we shall pass on to the subsequent volume, which opens with that well-known specimen of elegant Biography, the life of Savage.

The only variation from the former copies of this work that we have noted, is in the following passage. "In the publication of this performance (the Tragedy of Sir Thomas Overbury) he was more successful, for the rays of genius that glimmered in it, that glimmered through all the mists which poverty *and Cibber* had spread over it, procured him the notice and esteem of many persons," &c. To foist in a stigma upon a man so many years after he has lain peaceably in his grave, has the appearance of something singularly disingenuous and unmanly. Indeed, whenever Dr. Johnson has occasion to speak of Cibber, it is with an acrimony that, in any other man, we should suspect must have proceeded from personal resentment. Cibber's dulness has been so long the butt of ridicule with every pretender to wit, that we are surprised any writer, who affects originality of sentiment, should condescend to divert himself and his readers with so stale a topic. There is no pleasure, as Dr. Johnson elsewhere observes, in chacing a schoolboy to his common-places.

In characterizing Thomson's merit as a poet, his Biographer nearly coincides with the general opinion. As a man, however, the representation of his character is not so favourable. In the early part of life, while friendless and indigent, he is represented as soliciting kindness by servile adulation; and when afterwards he had the means

of gratification, it is insinuated, that he was grossly sensual. What authorities there are for the former part of this character appear not: the latter, in opposition to the suffrages of the most respectable of his contemporaries, rests solely on the testimony of the unprincipled and profligate Savage.

We are told that "Thomson, in his travels on the continent, found or fancied so many evils arising from the tyranny of other governments, that he resolved to write a very long poem, in five parts, upon Liberty." In this passage the Biographer seems to have brought himself into a dilemma: either there are no evils arising from the tyranny of arbitrary governments; or Thomson was a man of no observation. To which will Dr. Johnson subscribe?

Of Hammond, he says, "though he be well remembered as a man esteemed and caressed by the elegant and great, I was at first able to obtain no other memorials than such as are supplied by a book called *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*; of which I take this opportunity to testify that it was not written, nor, I believe, ever seen, by either of the Cibbers; but was the work of Robert Shiels, a native of Scotland, a man of very acute understanding, though with little scholastic education, who, not long after the publication of his work, died in London of a consumption. His life was virtuous, and his end was pious. Theophilus Cibber, then a prisoner for debt, imparted, as I was told, his name for ten guineas. The manuscript of Shiels is now in my possession." "His life was virtuous (De mortuis nil nisi *verum*, says the Doctor's able coadjutor, Mr. Crofts), &c."

In the above passage the Doctor has advanced more than he knew to be true. Cibber's receipt, which we are informed is still extant, is for *twenty* guineas, in consideration of which he engaged to "revise, correct, and improve" the work, and also to affix his name to the title-page. Cibber very punctually revised every sheet; he made numerous corrections, and added many improvements, particularly in those lives which came down to his own times, and brought him within the circle of his own and his

father's numerous literary acquaintance, especially in the dramatic line. Besides inserting paragraphs, notes, anecdotes and remarks, in those lives that were written by Shiels and others (for the best pieces of Biography in that collection were *not written by Shiels*, but by superior hands), some of the lives, if we are not greatly mistaken, were solely of his own composition. The engagement of Cibber, or some other Englishman, to superintend and correct what Shiels in particular should offer, was a measure absolutely necessary, not only to guard against his Scotticisms, and other defects of expression, but (what was worse) his virulent *Jacobitism*, which inclined him to abuse every one who held principles different from his own. But enough of Cibber and Shiels.

Hammond's Elegies are thus characterized—

"The Elegies were published after his death; and while the writer's name was remembered with fondness, they were read with a resolution to admire them. The recommendatory Preface of the editor, who was then believed, and is now affirmed by Dr. Maty, to be the Earl of Chesterfield, raised strong prejudices in their favour.

"But of the prefacer, whoever he was, it may be reasonably suspected that he never read the poems; for he professes to value them for a very high species of excellence, and recommends them as the genuine effusions of the mind, which express a real passion in the language of nature. But the truth is, these elegies have neither passion, nature, nor manners. Where there is fiction, there is no passion; he that describes himself as a shepherd, and his Neæra or Delia as a shepherdess, and talks of goats and lambs, feels no passion. He that courts his mistress with Roman imagery deserves to lose her; for she may with good reason suspect his sincerity. Hammond has few sentiments drawn from nature, and few images from modern life. He produces nothing but frigid pedantry. It would be hard to find in all his productions three stanzas that deserve to be remembered."

Dr. Johnson appears not to have recollected that Hammond's Elegies, the two last excepted, are taken almost

literally from Tibullus.[1] Considered merely in the light of translations they have a merit that translations rarely possess. Were it not for the Roman imagery, that is sometimes injudiciously retained, no one, unacquainted with the originals, would suspect that Hammond wrote not from his immediate feelings. To say that "it would be hard to find in all his productions three stanzas that deserve to be remembered," is certainly the height of prejudice. The Doctor forgets, that although at his time of life the subject of a love elegy may be totally uninteresting, it is not the case with every one, and we doubt not that at a certain period there are those who read them with

[1] To save the Reader, who may wish to satisfy himself on this head, the trouble of searching for the correspondent passages in Tibullus, they are as follow: Hammond's first Elegy is taken from Tib. B. 2. E. 4. to the 38th line; his second from B. 2. E. 6; his 3rd from B. 2. E. 4. L. 38th to the 50th; his 4th from B. 3. E. 5; his 5th from B. 1. E. 2; his 6th from B. 2. E. 7; his 7th from B. 2. E. 3; his 8th from B. 3. E. 3.; his 9th from B. 3. E. 2.; his 10th from B. 4. E. 5.; his 11th from B. 1. E. 11.; his 12th from B. 3. E. 7.; his 13th from B. 1. E. 1. Mr. Hammond has not, however, confined himself to a servile translation; there is scarcely an elegy but contains some stanzas, or sentiments at least, that are original. Sometimes he interweaves a passage from a different elegy from that which he is immediately copying, as in the following instance, in the 13th elegy, which is taken from the first of Tibullus, he introduces a compliment to the late Lord Chesterfield:

> Stanhope, in wisdom as in wit divine,
> May rise and plead Britannia's glorious cause,
> With steady rein his eager wit confine,
> While manly sense the deep attention draws.
>
> Let Stanhope speak his listening country's wrong,
> My humble voice shall please one partial maid;
> For her alone I pen the tender song,
> Securely sitting in his friendly shade.
>
> Stanhope shall come and grace his rural friend,
> Delia shall wonder at her noble guest,
> With blushing awe the riper fruit commend,
> And for her husband's patron cull the best.

The two first of these stanzas are original, the last is evidently borrowed from the following beautiful passage of the 5th elegy of the first book of Tibullus:

> Huc veniet Messala meus, cui dulcia poma
> Delia selectis detrahet arboribus:
> Et tantum venerata virum, hunc sedula curet;
> Huic paret, atque epulas ipsa ministra gerat.

greater avidity than even "LONDON," or "the VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES."

Dr. Johnson is at a loss to tell why Hammond, or other writers, have thought the quatrain of ten syllables elegiac. The character of elegy, he adds, is gentleness and tenuity. So long as some of the most violent and impetuous of the passions are the subjects of elegy, so long will this be an imperfect and mistaken definition.

The next life that offers itself is that of Collins: a writer whose imperfections and peculiarities are lost in the blaze of genius. But hear what Dr. Johnson says—"His diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure."

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The life we are now entering upon is that of Dr. Young, written, at the request of Dr. Johnson, by Mr. Herbert Croft, Junior, of Lincoln's Inn, a friend of the poet's son.

From the narrative part of this well-written piece of biography, we learn, that Dr. Young's father was Edward Young, at that time Fellow of Winchester College, and Rector of Upham; afterwards Dean of Sarum, and Chaplain to King William and Queen Mary. He was a learned and ingenious man, and is still remembered as the Author of two volumes of sermons.

Young, the Poet, was educated at Winchester. Remaining there till he was in his nineteenth year, he missed the opportunity, being superannuated by the statutes, of being elected upon the foundation at New College in Oxford. He was, however, admitted an independent member of that society, in October 1703. Here he continued only three months. The Warden, who was a particular friend of his father, dying, he removed to *Corpus*; invited there also by another friend of his father, the President of the

College; who, in order to lessen his academical expences, accommodated him, as had the Warden of New College, at his own lodgings. In 1708, he was nominated by Archbishop Tennison to a Law Fellowship at All Souls. In 1714, he took the degree of Batchelor of Civil Law, and the degree of Doctor in 1719.

"There are who relate," says Mr. Croft, "that, when first Young found himself independent, and his own master at All Souls, he was not the ornament to religion and morality which he afterwards became. The authority of his father, indeed, had ceased by his death in 1705; and Young was certainly not ashamed to be patronized by the infamous Wharton. But Wharton befriended in Young, perhaps, the poet, and particularly the tragedian. If virtuous authors must be patronized only by virtuous peers, who shall point them out?"

Mr. Croft afterwards accounts for the connection between them from motives which, while they exculpate the poet, do credit to the peer:

"Young's father had been well acquainted with Lady Anne Wharton, the first wife of Thomas Wharton, Esq; afterwards Marquis of Wharton—a Lady celebrated for her poetical talents by Burnet and by Waller. To the Dean of Sarum's visitation sermon, already mentioned, were added some copies of verses 'by that excellent poetess Mrs. Anne Wharton,' upon its being translated into English, at the instance of Waller, by Atwood. Wharton, after he became ennobled, did not drop the son of his old friend. In him, during the short time he lived, Young found a patron, and in his dissolute descendent a friend and a companion. The Marquis died in April 1715."

Sometime about the year 1721 he made an unsuccessful attempt, through the support of his patron, to get into parliament. He did not take orders till the year 1728, soon after which he was appointed chaplain to George the Second.

"In July 1730 he was presented by his College to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire. In April 1732 he married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, and widow of Colonel Lee. His connection with

this Lady arose from his father's acquaintance, already mentioned, with Lady Anne Wharton, who was co-heiress of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, in Oxfordshire."

This connection lasted only till the year 1740; death not only depriving him of his lady, but of her amiable daughter, the child of her former husband, who was just married to Mr. Temple, son of Lord Palmerston. Dr. Young's lady brought him one son, Frederic, now living; a gentleman whom the world, with a malignant cruelty scarcely to be paralleled, has for many years supposed to have sat for the picture of Lorenzo in the Night Thoughts. The refutation of this infamous slander we shall give in the words of Mr. Croft:

"The humanity of the world, little satisfied with inventing a melancholy disposition for the father, proceeds next to invent an argument in support of their invention, and chooses that Lorenzo should be Young's own son. The Biographia pretty roundly asserts this to be the fact; of the absolute impossibility of which the Biographia itself, in particular dates, contains undeniable evidence. Readers I know there are of a strange turn of mind, who will hereafter peruse the *Night Thoughts* with less satisfaction; who will wish they had still been deceived; who will quarrel with me for discovering that no such character as Lorenzo ever yet disgraced human nature, or broke a father's heart. Yet would these admirers of the sublime and terrible be offended, should you set them down for cruel and for savage.

"Of this report, inhuman to the surviving son, if it be untrue, in proportion as the character of Lorenzo is diabolical, where are we to find the proofs? Perhaps it is clear from the performance itself. From the first line to the last of the *Night Thoughts* no one expression can be discovered which betrays any thing like the father. In the second *Night* I find an expression which betrays something else; that Lorenzo was his friend; one, it is possible, of his former companions; one of the Duke of Wharton's sett. The Poet stiles him *Gay Friend*—an appellation not very natural from a pious incensed father to such a being as he paints Lorenzo, and that being his son.

"But let us see how he has sketched this dreadful portrait, from the sight of some of whose features the artist himself must have turned away with horror!—A subject more shocking, if his only child really sat to him, than the crucifixion of Michael Angelo; upon the horrid story told of which, Young composed a short poem of fourteen lines in the early part of his life, which he did not think deserved to be republished.

"In the first *Night*, the address to the Poet's supposed son is,

> Lorenzo, Fortune makes her court to thee.

"In the fifth *Night*—

> And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime
> Of life? To hang his airy nest on high?

Is this a picture of the son of the rector of Wellwyn?

"Eighth *Night*—

> In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd far)—

which even now does not apply to his son.

"In *Night* five—

> So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate,
> Who gave that angel-boy on whom he dotes,
> And died to give him, orphan'd in his birth!

"At the beginning of the fifth *Night* we find—

> Lorenzo! to recriminate is just.
> I grant the man is vain who writes for praise.

"But, to cut short all enquiry, if any one of these passages, if any passage in the poems be applicable, my friend shall pass for Lorenzo. The son of the author of the *Night Thoughts* was not old enough, when the *Night Thoughts* were written, to recriminate, or to be a father. The *Night Thoughts* were begun immediately after the mournful events of 1740. The first *Nights* appear in the Stationers books as the property of Robert Dodsley, in 1742. The Preface to *Night* Seven is dated July the 7th, 1744. The marriage, in consequence of which the supposed Lorenzo was born, happened in April 1732. Young's

child was not born till June 1733. In 1740 this Lorenzo, this finished infidel, this *father*, to whose education Vice had for some years put the last hand, was only *seven* years old. An anecdote of this cruel sort, so open to contradiction, so impossible to be true, who could propagate? Thus easily are blasted the reputations of the living and of the dead."

Having in vain panted after advancement, and (we are sorry to add) courted it by all the arts of adulation through every period of his life, he at last, at the age of fourscore, was appointed, in 1761, Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager of Wales. He lived to be fourscore and four, dying in April 1765.

How Young, with every advantage in his favour that a candidate for preferment could wish for, should end his days at eighty-four upon a College living, is a problem not easily to be solved. It has been said, and indeed seems probable, that his talents, or at least the manner in which he employed them, procured him a pension of 200*l. per annum* from the late King.

For Young's poetical life we must refer to Mr. Croft; having no room to insert what he has said on that subject, entertaining as it is, in this place. With respect to the stile of Mr. Croft's composition, the Reader will be amused to observe how well he has taken off the manner of his friend, Dr. Johnson. He has done it, indeed, so ingeniously, that it must be a shrewd critic who, from internal evidence, would suspect that the life of Young was not written by the same pen which produced the rest of the lives in this collection.

Young's poetical character has, however, devolved upon Dr. Johnson; and he has drawn it with impartiality and precision:

"Of Young's poems it is difficult to give any general character; for he has no uniformity of manner: one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early, and continued long; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are sometimes smooth, and sometimes rugged; his stile is sometimes concatenated, and sometimes abrupt;

sometimes diffusive, and sometimes concise. His plan seems to have started in his mind at the present moment, and his thoughts appear the effects of chance, sometimes adverse, and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgment."

"In his *Night Thoughts*, he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme butwith disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by regard to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness, but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole, and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese Plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity."

"It must be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or selection. When he lays hold of an illustration, he pursues it beyond expectation, sometimes happily, as in his parallel of *Quicksilver* with *Pleasure*, which I have heard repeated with approbation by a Lady,[1] of whose praise he would have been justly proud, and which is very ingenious, very subtle, and almost exact; but sometimes he is less lucky, as when, in his *Night Thoughts*, having it dropped into his mind, that the orbs, floating in space, might be called the *cluster* of Creation, he thinks on a cluster of grapes, and

[1] Dr. Johnson is pointedly severe upon Pope for making an ostentatious display of his intimacy with *the Great*. If the principle upon which he censures him be just, it may with equal propriety be applied to himself with respect to *the Fair*; with whom the Doctor takes frequent opportunities, as in the passage above, of hinting that he lives in the greatest familiarity. In truth, no one, not troubled with the spleen, will think there is much room for reprehension in either case: why might not the Poet very innocently mention those with whom it was well known he constantly associated? and why may not the Critic be permitted to go a little out of his way to pay a compliment to the anonymous Ladies, by whose smiles and approbation he appears, and, we presume, not without reason, to be so highly gratified?

says, that they all hang on the great Vine, drinking the *nectareous juice of immortal Life.*"—

"His verses are formed by no certain model; for he is no more like himself in his different productions than he is like others. He seems never to have studied prosody, nor to have had any direction but from his own ear. But, with all his defects, he was a man of genius, and a poet."

The next in succession is Dyer; the slender particulars of whose life being already known, it were needless to repeat them.

In the year 1757 he published the Fleece, his greatest poetical work; "of which," says Dr. Johnson, "I will not suppress a ludicrous story. Dodsley the bookseller was one day mentioning it to a critical visiter, with more expectation of success than the other could easily admit. In the conversation the author's age was asked; and being represented as advanced in life, *He will*, said the critic, *be buried in woollen.*"

With most profound submission to the recorder of this ludicrous story, as it is here called, the critical visiter's remark is, surely, as lame an attempt at wit as ever disgraced the vilest pages of the vilest jest book.

Of *Grongar Hill*, Dyer's earliest production, we are told, that when it is once read, it will be read again; of the *Ruins of Rome*, that the title raises greater expectation than the performance gratifies. And of *the Fleece*, which never became popular, that it is now universally neglected, and that little can be said likely to recal it to attention. "The woolcomber and the poet, appear to me such discordant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is to *couple the serpent with the fowl.* When Dyer, whose mind was not unpoetical, has done his utmost, by interesting his reader in our native commodity, by interspersing rural imagery and incidental digressions, by cloathing small images in great words, and by all the writer's arts of delusion, the meanness naturally adhering, and the irreverence habitually annexed, to trade and manufacture, sink him under insuperable oppression; and the disgust which blank verse, encumbering and encumbered, super-

adds to an unpleasing subject, soon repels the reader, however willing to be pleased.

" Let me however honestly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of censure. I have been told that Akenside, who, upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard, said, " That he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's *Fleece* ; for, if that were ill-received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence."

We fear it is more owing to a decline of poetical taste than to any defects that are here pointed out, that Dyer's *Fleece* has been so undeservedly neglected. Indeed, if the time would permit, it would be no difficult undertaking to prove, that the greatest part of the objections that Dr. Johnson has raised against this excellent poem might with equal justice be brought against the Georgics of Virgil, a performance which, nevertheless, will be admired as long as poetry is understood.

Of David Mallet, having no written memorial, I am, says his Biographer, able to give no other account than such as is supplied by the unauthorised loquacity of common fame, and a very slight personal knowledge.

" He was by his original one of the Macgregors, a clan that became, about sixty years ago, under the conduct of Robin Roy, so formidable and so infamous for violence and robbery, that the name was annulled by a legal abolition ; and when they were all to denominate themselves anew, the father, I suppose, of this author called himself Malloch."

He had his education at Edinburgh, and was afterwards engaged by the Duke of Montrose as tutor to his sons. Through this connexion, he got introduced into the capital :

" Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation so as to be no longer distinguished as a Scot, he seems inclined to disencumber himself from all adherences of his original, and took upon him to change his name from Scotch *Malloch* to English *Mallet*, without any imaginable reason of preference which the eye or ear can discover. What other proofs he gave of disrespect to his native country I know not ; but it was remarked of him, that

he was the only Scot whom Scotchmen did not commend."

If what we are told in a subsequent part of this narrative be true, his countrymen are fully justified in withholding their commendation from him:

"In the beginning of the last war, when the nation was exasperated by ill success, he was employed to turn the public vengeance upon Byng, and wrote a letter of accusation under the character of a *Plain Man*. The paper was with great industry circulated and dispersed; and he, for his seasonable intervention, had a considerable pension bestowed upon him, which he retained to his death."

We are not to be surprised, that they, who were every moment expecting the tide of public vengeance to overwhelm them, should make little scruple to sacrifice another to favour their own escape. But what sentiments are we to entertain of that human bloodhound, who could be base enough to undertake, from the meanest of all motives, the diabolical business of hunting down a wounded, perhaps an innocent, man! If the enormity of the crime be considered in its full extent, as affecting not only the unfortunate victim, but his remotest connexions, the assassin, who at once plants a dagger in your heart, is, compared with such a monster as this, a character of innocence. It is wonderful there could be found any one to execute such a fiend-like employment. But it is still more wonderful, that Dr. Johnson, the delicacy of whose moral feelings can on some occasions assume such exquisite sensibility, should coolly pass over so atrocious an instance of unprincipled depravity as this, with no other remark than, that "for his seasonable intervention he had a considerable pension bestowed upon him, which he retained to his death." We may say in the words of the poet,

Are these the paths that lead to pension'd ease!

But let us turn from such a character as this, and contemplate the features of benevolence and humanity in the blameless life of Shenstone.

Shenstone was born in November 1714, at the Leasowes in Hales-Owen, near Hagley. After being awhile at the Grammar-school in Hales-Owen, he was placed with

Mr. Crumpton, an eminent school-master in Solihul. From school he was sent in 1732 to Pembroke-College in Oxford, of which society, though he took no degree, he continued a member ten years. In 1737, he published a small miscellany, without his name.

"He then for a time wandered about, to acquaint himself with life; and was sometimes at London, sometimes at Bath, or any other place of public resort; but he did not forget his poetry. He published in 1740 his *Judgment of Hercules*, addressed to Mr. Lyttelton, whose interest he supported with great warmth at an election: this was two years afterwards followed by the *Schoolmistress*.

"Mr. Dolman, to whose care he was indebted for his ease and leisure, died in 1745, and the care of his own fortune now fell upon him. He tried to escape it a while, and lived at his house with his tenants, who were distantly related; but finding that imperfect possession inconvenient, he took the whole estate into his own hands, more to the improvement of its beauty than the increase of its produce.

"Now began his delight in rural pleasures, and his ambition of rural elegance: he began from this time to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with such judgment and such fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great, and the admiration of the skilful; a place to be visited by travellers, and copied by designers."

How exquisite Dr. Johnson's taste is in matters of this kind may be collected from his comment on what he calls the ambition of rural elegance. "Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make water run where it will be heard, or to stagnate where it will be seen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden, demands any great powers of mind, I will not enquire; perhaps a sullen and surly speculator may think such performances rather the sport than the business of human reason." These splenetic remarks are, however, in some degree qualified by what follows: "But continues he, it must at least be confessed, that to embellish

the form of Nature is an innocent amusement; and some praise must be allowed, by the most supercilious observer, to him, who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well."

Shenstone's death, which his anxieties probably contributed to hasten, was occasioned by a putrid fever, February 1763.

His poems consist of elegies, odes, and ballads, humourous sallies, and moral pieces. "Of his elegies, Dr. Johnson remarks, that the thoughts are pure and simple; but, wanting combination, they want variety. The lines are sometimes, such as elegy requires, smooth and easy; but to this praise his claim is not constant: his diction is often harsh, improper, and affected; his words ill-coined, or ill-chosen, and his phrase unskilfully inverted.

"The Lyric poems are almost all of the light and airy kind, such as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning. From these, however, *Rural Elegance* has some right to be excepted. *I once heard it praised by a very learned lady*; and though the lines are irregular, and the thoughts diffused with too much verbosity, yet it cannot be denied to contain both philosophical argument and poetical spirit."

Speaking of the Pastoral Ballad, Dr. Johnson says, "I cannot but regret that it is pastoral; an intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the *crook*, the *pipe*, the *sheep*, and the *kids*, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice, for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to shew the beauties without the grossness of the country life."

So far from agreeing with the Doctor, in regretting that it is pastoral, we should regret (and we believe most readers would join with us) if it were any thing else than what it is. An intelligent reader may be allowed to sicken at the mention of the crook, the pipe, the sheep, and the kids, by

A Pastoral Poet in Leadenhall-street;

but he must be unacquainted with the scenes of real life (unless Dr. Johnson confine the idea of real life to the smoke of a city) who knows not that pastoral images,

to a man, who, like Shenstone, employed the chief part of his time in cultivating and embellishing his grounds, are obvious and familiar, and, consequently, their introduction into his poetry is natural and in character. The grossness of such images as are neither physically impure, nor in their own nature disgusting, it is not easy to discover.

Dr. Akenside, whose life and poetical character come next in review, was a native of Newcastle upon Tyne, where his father was a butcher. At the age of eighteen he was sent to Edinburgh, that he might qualify himself for the office of a Dissenting Minister; his inclination, however, directed him to the study of physic. "Whether, when he resolved not to be a Dissenting Minister, he ceased to be a Dissenter, says Dr. Johnson, I know not. He certainly retained an unnecessary and outrageous zeal for what he called and thought liberty." This *unnecessary* and *outrageous* zeal for LIBERTY seems to have given his Biographer (who seldom overlooks THAT object) great offence, as he has stigmatized it in almost every page of this short history.

In 1741 he went in pursuit of medical knowledge to Leyden. He there took the degree of Doctor of Physic. On his return to England he first practised at Northampton. From thence he removed to Hampstead, which, after two years residence, he quitted for London. "At London he was known as a poet, but was still to make his way as a physician; and would perhaps have been reduced to great exigencies, but that Mr. Dyson, with an ardour of friendship that has not many examples, allowed him three hundred pounds a year."

He lived only to be forty-eight; dying in June 1770.

Of his great work, the Pleasures of the Imagination, Dr. Johnson speaks in terms of approbation. To his Lyric compositions he is less favourable.

The remaining lives to be considered are those of Lyttelton, West, and Gray. Of Lyttelton we are told, "he was a very early writer, both in verse and prose. His *Progress of Love*, and his *Persian Letters*, were both written when he was very young; and, indeed, the character of a young

man is very visible in both. The Verses cant of shepherds and flocks, and crooks dressed with flowers; and the Letters have something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward."

This last remark is, surely, neither just with respect to the person against whom it is particularly directed; nor is it true in its more general application. Lord Lyttelton's subsequent life and writings fully evince, that the sentiments of liberty which he imbibed in youth he retained to old age. There is, perhaps, no passion, when once it has taken firm possession of the mind, that burns with more unabating ardour than that which has liberty for its object: and for this very obvious reason; liberty is an object that is equally desirable through every period of life.

Gilbert West was the son of the Reverend Dr. West; his mother was sister to Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham. In the early part of life he had a commission in a troop of horse; finding himself afterwards more inclined to civil employment, he laid down his commission and engaged in business under Lord Townshend, then Secretary of State. His adherence to Lord Townshend does not appear to have been attended with very lucrative advantages; it ended in nothing but a nomination (May 1729) to be Clerk Extraordinary of the Privy Council, which produced no immediate profit. It was not till the year 1752 that he received any benefit from his nomination. "It is reported that the education of the young Prince was offered to him, but *that he required a more extensive power of superintendence than was thought proper to allow him.*" This amiable and exemplary man was taken off by a stroke of the palsy in March 1756. His poetry and its character, which is here confirmed, are both sufficiently known.

In estimating the poetical pretensions of Mr. Gray, Dr. Johnson deviates so widely from the general opinion, that it may not be amiss to pay more than usual attention to what he has advanced on this subject. We shall confine

ourselves, however, to his critique on what he calls *The wonderful wonder of wonders*, the two Sister Odes; "by which, says he, though either vulgar ignorance or common sense at first universally rejected them, many have been since persuaded to think themselves delighted. I am one of those that are willing to be pleased, and therefore would gladly find the meaning of the first stanza of the *Progress of Poetry*.

"Gray seems in his rapture to confound the images of *spreading sound* and *running water*. A *stream of musick* may be allowed; but where does *Musick*, however *smooth and strong*, after having visited the *verdant vales*, *rowl down the steep amain*, so as that *rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar?* If this be said of *Musick*, it is nonsense; if it be said of *Water*, it is nothing to the purpose.

"The second stanza, exhibiting Mars's car and Jove's eagle, is unworthy of further notice. Criticism disdains to chase a school-boy to his common places.

"To the third it may likewise be objected, that it is drawn from Mythology, though such as may be more easily assimilated to real life. Idalia's *velvet green* has something of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art: an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature. Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. *Many-twinkling* was formerly censured as not analogical; we may say *many-spotted*, but scarcely *many-spotting*. This stanza, however, has something pleasing.

"Of the second ternary of stanzas, the first endeavours to tell something, and would have told it, had it not been crossed by Hyperion: the second describes well enough the universal prevalence of Poetry; but I am afraid that the conclusion will not rise from the premises. The caverns of the North and the plains of Chili are not the residences of *Glory* and *generous Shame*. But that Poetry and Virtue go always together is an opinion so pleasing, that I can forgive him who resolves to think it true.

"The third stanza sounds big with *Delphi*, and *Egean*, and *Ilissus*, and *Meander*, and *hallowed fountain* and *solemn sound*; but in all Gray's odes there is a kind of

cumbrous splendor which we wish away. His position is at last false: in the time of Dante and Petrarch, from whom he derives our first school of Poetry, Italy was over-run by *tyrant power* and *coward vice*; nor was our state much better when we first borrowed the Italian arts.

"Of the third ternary, the first gives a mythological birth of Shakespeare. What is said of that mighty genius is true; but it is not said happily: the real effects of his poetical power are put out of sight by the pomp of machinery. Where truth is sufficient to fill the mind, fiction is worse than useless; the counterfeit debases the genuine.

"His account of Milton's blindness, if we suppose it caused by study in the formation of his poem, a supposition surely allowable, is poetically true, and happily imagined. But the *car* of Dryden, with his *two coursers*, has nothing in it peculiar; it is a car in which any other rider may be placed.

"*The Bard* appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superior to its original; and, if preference depends only on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgment is right. There is in *The Bard* more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is less than to invent, and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; but its revival disgusts us with apparent and unconquerable falsehood. *Incredulus odi.*

"To select a singular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty, for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous; and it has little use, we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find something to be imitated or declined. I do not see that *The Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political.

"His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and consequently before it can receive pleasure from their consonance and recurrence.

"Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly upon his subject, that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armstrong*.

Is there ever a man in all Scotland—

"The initial resemblances, or alliterations, *ruin, ruthless, helm nor hauberk*, are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at sublimity.

"In the second stanza the *Bard* is well described; but in the third we have the puerilities of obsolete mythology. When we are told that *Cadwallo hush'd the stormy main*, and that Modred made *huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-top'd head*, attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was first heard, was heard with scorn.

"The *weaving* of the *winding sheet* he borrowed, as he owns, from the northern Bards; but their texture, however, was very properly the work of female powers. as the art of spinning the thread of life is another mythology. Theft is always dangerous; Gray has made weavers of his slaughtered bards, by a fiction outrageous and incongruous. They are then called upon to *Weave the warp, and weave the woof*, perhaps with no great propriety; for it is by crossing the *woof* with the *warp* that men *weave* the *web* or piece; and the first line was dearly bought by the admission of its wretched correspondent, *Give ample room and verge enough*. He has, however, no other line as bad.

"The third stanza of the second ternary is commended, I think, beyond its merit. The personification is indistinct. *Thirst* and *Hunger* are not alike; and their features, to make the imagery perfect, should have been discriminated. We are told, in the same stanza, how *towers* are *fed*. But I will no longer look for particular faults; yet let it be observed, that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but suicide is always to be had, without expence of thought.

"These odes are marked by glittering accumulations

of ungraceful ornaments; they strike rather than please; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. *Double, double, toil and trouble.* He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease or nature.

"To say that he has no beauties would be unjust; a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said that a good design was ill directed."

Dr. Johnson sets out with telling his Readers, that *he is one of those that are willing to be pleased*, and that, consequently, he would be glad to find the meaning of the first stanza of the Progress of Poetry. It seems rather, that he is less desirous of finding the meaning of it himself, than of preventing others from finding it. Nothing can be more obvious and intelligible, we had almost said trite, than the allegory with which the Progress of Poetry commences. It is true, there is an inaccuracy in suffering the concealed idea to break through the figurative expression, as it does in the seventh line:

Now the rich stream of *music* winds along.

Of this, little as it can add to the embarrassment of the scene, the Critic has, however, spared no pains to avail himself.

The objection to the second stanza (part of which, indeed, is borrowed from Pindar) will lose much of its force if we advert only to the almost inseparable connection between the poetry of the ancients and their mythology: we shall then perceive, that the influence of the poetical art upon the inhabitants of Greece may not be improperly described by classical imagery.

What is said of the second ternary of stanzas will be found, we are of opinion, a continued tissue of misrepresentation. "The first, says he, endeavours to tell something, and would have told it, *had it not been* crossed by Hyperion." The liberality and candour of this criticism

will best appear, by confronting it with the beautiful passage against which it is levelled:

> Man's feeble race what ills await,
> Labour, and penury, the racks of pain,
> Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
> And death, sad refuge from the storms of fate!
> The fond complaint, my song, disprove,
> And justify the laws of Jove.
> Say, has he giv'n in vain the heav'nly Muse?
> Night, and all her sickly dews,
> Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry,
> He gives to range the dreary sky:
> Till down the eastern cliffs afar
> Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of war.

Gray is next represented as telling his readers that the caverns of the North and the plains of Chili are the residence of *Glory and generous Shame.* Whoever will look into the stanza from whence this information is collected, will find that he says no such thing. All that he tells his readers (divesting it of its poetical language) is, that there have been poets even among the natives of Greenland and Chili; and that in those breasts, that are susceptible of the impressions of poetry, there is the residence of Glory,

> and generous shame,
> Th' unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame—

An assertion not only poetical, but, if taken with that degree of latitude with which a general assertion ought to be, philosophically true.

It was sufficient to assert, that *The Bard* is but a copy from the Prophecy of Nereus (an assertion, however, which every one will not, probably, agree to), without degrading it by a charge of a still meaner plagiarism: it certainly required singular ingenuity to find out, that the abrupt manner in which it opens was suggested by the ballad of Johnny Armstrong! The weaving of the winding-sheet may be given up: Gray was no Spitalfields poet.

That "his odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments, that strike rather than please; and that his images are magnified by affectation," will, at least, be thought severe: but it is, surely, more than

severe to say, that " he has a strutting kind of dignity, and that he is tall by walking on tip-toe."

It is not to be wondered at, if, to the professed admirers of Mr. Gray, the manner in which he has been treated by Dr. Johnson should appear not only hostile, but malignant: and if they once entertain an opinion that there is malignity in his censure, they will suspect, it is to be feared, that there is treachery in his praise; the passage, upon which he has bestowed his warmest commendations, being, perhaps, the most exceptionable that the severity of criticism could have selected. It is that in which he accounts for Milton's blindness:

> Nor second he, that rode sublime
> Upon the seraph wings of extasy,
> The secrets of th' abyss to spy,
> He passed the flaming bounds of place and time:
> The living throne, the sapphire-blaze,
> Where angels tremble while they gaze,
> He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
> Clos'd his eyes in endless night.

It is not to be denied that the images he employs are splendidly magnificent: but that the exertions of intellectual vision should extinguish the poet's corporeal eyes, is a forced and unnatural idea. It is one of those false and hyperbolical thoughts, which, though they may possibly be admired in the poetry of Spain, the chaste simplicity of classical composition ought not to admit of. But even supposing the possibility of the fact, the consequence is inadequate to its cause; so that, which ever way the sentiment be examined, it comes under the class of the false sublime: for if just, it is an anti-climax; if not, it is bombast. And yet it is this sentiment which Dr. Johnson has particularly marked as " poetically true and happily imagined."

But, peace to the manes of the Poet!

The eagle tow'ring in his pride of place is still an eagle, notwithstanding a defective feather in his wing.

After the minute and particular attention that has been bestowed upon these volumes as they came before us in succession, to enter into a general discussion of them collectively would be superfluous. It may not, however,

be unnecessary to observe, notwithstanding they contain a fund of profound and original criticism, which, perhaps, no other pen but the Doctor's could have supplied, that some caution is, nevertheless, required to peruse them with advantage. Instances too frequently occur, in which the Critic's judgment seems altogether under the dominion of predilection or prejudice. To think for himself in critical, as in all other, matters, is a privilege to which every one is undoubtedly intitled: this privilege of critical independence, an affectation of singularity, or some other principle, not immediately visible, is for ever betraying him into a dogmatical spirit of contradiction to received opinions. Of this there need no farther proofs than his almost uniform attempt to depreciate the writers of blank verse, and his rough treatment of Gray. He observes of Shenstone, that he set little value upon those parts of knowledge which he had not cultivated himself; his own taste of poetry seems in some degree regulated by a similar standard: method, ratiocination, and argument, especially if the vehicle be rhyme, oftentimes obtaining his regard and commendation, while the bold and enthusiastic, though perhaps irregular, flights of imagination, are past by with perverse and obstinate indifference. It is not, then, to be wondered at, that the panegyrist of Blackmore should withhold from Collins and Gray what he has bestowed upon Savage and Yalden. Through the whole of his performance the desire of praise, excepting in the case of some very favourite author, is almost always overpowered by his disposition to censure; and while beauties are passed over "with the neutrality of a stranger and the coldness of a critic," the slightest blemish is examined with microscopical sagacity. The truth of this observation is particularly obvious when he descends to his contemporaries; for whom, indeed, he appears to have little more brotherly kindness than they might have expected at Constantinople. And so visibly does the fastidiousness of his criticism increase, as his work approaches to a conclusion, that his Readers will scarcely forbear exclaiming, with honest Candide, What a wonderful genius is this Pococurante! Nothing can please him!

June 1780 Vol. 62 p. 479[1]

A Prefatory Advertisement to this publication informs us, that "the following Remarks are a small part of a work lately given to the Public,[2] wherein occasion is incidentally taken to exhibit some instances of the manner in which Milton's character has been treated by some of his former biographers and others. About the time *that* specimen was closed, Dr. Johnson's *New Narrative* was thrown in the way of the editors, and could not be overlooked without leaving some of the more candid and capable judges of Milton's prose-writings to suffer by the illiberal reflections of certain (perhaps well-meaning) men, who may be led to think that truth, judgment, and impartiality are small matters, when contrasted with what Dr. Johnson's admirers have thought fit to call, an inimitable elegance of stile and composition. Our countrymen are certainly interested, that wrong representations of the character of so capital a writer as John Milton should be corrected, and properly censured; and therefore as the work from which the following Remarks are extracted may fall into the hands of very few of the numerous readers of Dr. Johnson's *Prefaces*, we hope the public will approve of our republishing these strictures on the Doctor's account of Milton, in a form to which may be had an easier and more general access."

The acrimony with which Dr. Johnson has permitted himself to treat the character of Milton is well known. Those parts of his Narrative which seemed to be more particularly obnoxious were pointed out, so far at least as the nature of our work and the limits assigned to each individual article would admit of, in the Review for August 1779. The present Writer takes a larger field. He enters into a minute and ample vindication of the injured bard, not without recrimination on his learned historian. If, perhaps, he may be less acrimonious, his Remarks are not without a due portion of asperity: he has certainly given his antagonist *a Rowland for his Oliver*.

[1] Art. XIII. *Remarks on Johnson's Life of Milton.* To which are added Milton's Tractate on Education. Small 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.* sewed. Dilly. 1780.

[2] Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, Esq.; 2 vol. 4to., of which an account will speedily be given in this Review.

He enters into the detail of Dr. Johnson's particular malevolence to Milton, from its first appearance to its consummation in the history of his life. It first appeared, as this Writer tells us, in his connexion with Lauder, the mean calumniator of Milton's poetical fame. What share Dr. Johnson had in that dirty business, will at this distance of time be perhaps difficult to discover. Charity, however, inclines us to hope that his share was not so great as this Remarker seems willing to attribute to him.

That part of Milton's conduct, on which Dr. Johnson lays considerable stress, and which some of his warmest admirers have thought reprehensible, is his attachment to Cromwell. What is advanced on this subject by the present Writer seems to be a reasonable justification of him.

" Milton's attachment to Cromwell has been imputed to him as a blot in his character long before it was taken up by Dr. Johnson ; who, to give him his due, has made the most of it in a small compass.

" Milton," says he, " having tasted the honey of public employment, would not return to hunger and philosophy ; but, continuing to exercise his office under a manifest usurpation, betrayed to his power that liberty which he had defended."

" It is hardly necessary to apprize a reader of Milton's prose-works that his ideas of *usurpation* and *public liberty* were very different from those of Dr. Johnson. In the Doctor's system of government, public liberty is the *free grace* of an *hereditary* monarch, and limited in kind and degree by his gracious will and pleasure ; and consequently to controul his arbitrary acts by the interposition of good and wholesome laws, is a *manifest usurpation* upon his prerogative. Milton allotted to the people a considerable and important share in political government, founded upon original stipulations for the rights and privileges of free subjects, and called the monarch who should infringe or encroach upon these, however qualified by lineal succession, a tyrant and an usurper, and freely consigned him to the vengeance of an injured people. Upon Johnson's plan, there can be no such thing as public liberty. Upon

Milton's, where the laws are duly executed, and the people protected in the peaceable and legal enjoyment of their lives, properties, and municipal rights and privileges, there can be no such thing as *usurpation*, in whose hands soever the executive power should be lodged. From this doctrine Milton never swerved; and in that noble apostrophe to Cromwell, in his Second Defense of the People of England, he spares not to remind him, what a wretch and a villain he would be, should he invade those liberties which his valour and magnanimity had restored. If, after this, Milton's employers deviated from *his* idea of their duty, be it remembered, that he was neither in their secrets, nor an instrument in their arbitrary acts or encroachments on the legal rights of the subject; many (perhaps the most) of which were to be justified by the necessity of the times, and the malignant attempts of those who laboured to restore that wicked race of despotic rulers, the individuals of which had uniformly professed an utter enmity to the claims of a free people, and had acted accordingly, in perfect conformity to Dr. Johnson's political creed. On another hand, be it observed, that in those State-letters, latinized by Milton, which remain, and in those particularly written in the name of the Protector Oliver, the strictest attention is paid to the dignity and importance of the British nation, to the protection of trade, and the Protestant religion, by spirited expostulations with foreign powers on any infraction of former treaties, in a style of steady determination, of which there have been few examples in subsequent times. A certain sign in what esteem the British government was held at that period by all the other powers of Europe. And as this was the only province in which Milton acted under that government which Dr. Johnson calls an usurpation, let his services be compared with those performed by Dr. Johnson for his present patrons; and let the constitutional subject of the British empire judge which of them better deserves the appellation of a traitor to public liberty, or have more righteously earned the *honey* of a pension.

"The real *usurper is the wicked ruler over a poor people*, by whatever means the *power* falls into his hands. And

whenever it happens that the *imperium ad optimum quemque a minus bono transfertur*, the subject is or should be too much interested in the fact to consider any character of the rejected ruler but his vicious ambition, the violence and injustice of his counsels, and the flagitious acts by which they were executed.

" These petulant reflections of the Doctor on Milton, might, many of them, easily be answered by recrimination ; we have often wondered, in running over this *new narrative*, that the consciousness of the historian's heart did not disable his hand for recording several things to the reproach of Milton, which rebound with double force on his own notorious conduct. Has he always believed that the government of the House of Hanover was less an usurpation than that of Oliver Cromwell ? Having tasted the honey of a pension for writing ministerial pamphlets, would he feel no regret in returning once more to hunger and philosophy ?

" The Doctor perhaps will tell us, that he is in no danger of starving, even though his pension should be suspended to-morrow. Be it so ; and by what kind of proof will he shew that Milton had no means of earning his bread but his political employment ?

" Milton however made the experiment, which happily Dr. Johnson has not ; and that too after the Restoration ; and resisted the temptations of court favour, and the solicitations of his wife to accept of it, with a magnanimity which would do him honour with any man but the author of the *new narrative.*

" Milton's reason for rejecting this offer was, that ' his wish was to live and die an honest man.' But, says the Doctor, ' If he considered the Latin Secretary as exercising any of the powers of government, he that had shared authority, either with the parliament or Cromwell, might have forborn to talk very loudly of his honesty,' p. 91.

" The venom of this remark happens to be too weak to do any mischief. Casuists of all sects and complexions have done justice to the honesty of men who adhered to their principles and persuasions, though they might judge wrong in the choice of them.

"He goes on, 'And if he thought the office ministerial only, he certainly might have *honestly* retained it under the King.' Not quite so *certainly*. But Milton's and Dr. Johnson's notions of *honesty* are so widely different, that we cannot admit the Doctor to estimate Milton's honesty by his own scale. In the end, however, he questions the fact.

"But this tale has too little evidence to deserve a disquisition: large offers and sturdy rejections are among the most common topics of falsehood." That is, in plain unaffected English, 'No man could ever reject a large offer, though on conditions ever so repugnant to his professed principles.' But the Doctor is but an individual, and his experience from his own particular case will not be admitted as the standard of other men's integrity; and yet this is the only reason he gives for rejecting this anecdote, so honourable to Milton.

"Milton's attachment to Cromwell was evidently founded on different considerations. The narrowness of the Presbyterians in their notions of Liberty, and particularly of religious liberty, had appeared upon many occasions. He more than hints, in his Areopagitica, their inclination to govern by the episcopal and oppressive maxims of the Stuart race. He saw and abhorred their attempts to shackle the faith of Protestants and Christians in the bonds of systems, confessions, tests, and subscriptions."

The lamentable influence of party prejudices cannot more forcibly be illustrated than by comparing, with our ingenious Author, the different treatment that Dryden and Milton have experienced at the hands of the same Biographer.

"The Doctor, in speculating upon Dryden's perversion to Popery, and (as one of the Reviewers of his prefaces expresses it) 'attempting ingeniously to extenuate it,' concludes that, *Enquiries into the heart are not for man.*

"No truly, not when Dryden's apostacy is to be *extenuated;* but when poor Milton's sins are to be *ingeniously* aggravated, no Spanish Inquisitor more sharp-sighted to discern the devil playing his pranks in the heart of the poor culprit, or more ready to conduct him to an *auto de fe.*

"In Dryden's case, the presumption is, that a comprehensive is likewise an elevated soul, and that whoever is wise, is likewise honest." But if it is *natural* to hope this, why not hope it of Milton as well as of Dryden? Where is the competent impartial judge who will admit, that Milton's soul was less comprehensive or less elevated than the soul of Dryden?

"But what occasion for all this grimace in accounting for Dryden's transition from what he did or did not profess to the church of Rome? Dr. Johnson ought to have been satisfied with Dryden's own account in his tale of the Hind and the Panther; the rather, as he there seems to have verified by experience Dr. Johnson's maxim, that 'he that is of no church can have no religion.' He frankly confesses, that having no steady principle of religion in his youth, or even in his maturer years, he finally set up his rest in the church of Rome: and indeed if the essentials of religion consist in the trappings of a church, he could not have made a better choice.[1]

"Dryden was reprehensible even to infamy for his own vices, and the licentious encouragement he gave in his writings to those of others. But he wrote an anti-republican poem called *Absalom* and *Achitophel;* and Dr. Johnson, a man of high pretensions to moral character, calls him a wise and an honest man. Milton was a man of the chastest manners, both in his conversation and his writings. But he wrote *Iconoclastes*, and in the same Dr. Johnson's esteem was both a knave and a fool.

"The church of Rome substitutes orthodoxy for every virtue under heaven. And loyalty among the high Royalists canonizes every rascal and profligate with a full and plenary absolution. These are, it is true, amongst the vilest and meanest partialities of the despotic faction; and Dr. Johnson, conscious of his merit in other departments, should blush, and be humbled, to be found in the list of such miserables."

[1] Bp. Burnet speaking of Dryden's conversion, says, "If his grace and his wit improve both proportionably, we shall hardly find that he hath gained much by the change he has made, from having no religion to chuse one of the worst." *Reply to* Mr. Varillas, p.139.

From the specimens exhibited it will be no difficult matter to form an idea of the nature and spirit of the performance under consideration. The Writer seems actuated by a generous concern for the reputation of an injured individual, and by a truly patriotic regard for the general liberties of mankind; which he thinks, and perhaps not without reason, have been insidiously attacked by a masked battery directed at the moral character of Milton, one of Liberty's most zealous and respectable advocates.

These Remarks, so far as they immediately relate to Dr. Johnson, are closed with a Dissertation on his motives for composing the speech delivered by the late unhappy Dr. Dodd, when he was about to hear the sentence of the law pronounced upon him, in consequence of an indictment for forgery. Though this, certainly, is a subject which will naturally excite much *curious* speculation, yet its introduction here does not appear sufficiently authorized by propriety, as it seems to bear not the remotest relation to the point in debate.

SECTION IV

THE PLAYS OF WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON AND GEORGE STEEVENS.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE PLAYS (*Malone*).

IV

Jan. 1780 Vol. 62 p. 12[1]

We are here presented with an improved and truly valuable edition of the Works of a poet who hath long been classed among the most astonishing phænomena of human genius. Panegyric hath been exhausted in his praise; and the invention of a Shakspeare only, could furnish fresh topics of encomium.

The first characters for ingenuity and erudition have not disdained, what Mr. Pope in one of his proud and splenetic moments, called *the dull Duty of Editors*, in order to illustrate the productions of this immortal Bard. But dull as that duty might appear to a man of genius, Mr. Pope himself submitted to the task. Nothing but the superior dignity of the name, and the unrivalled excellence of the Works of Shakspeare, could have tempted so illustrious a poet to become an editor;—a poet, whose *own* admired writings had been distinguished by the notes and conjectures of various critics, and were at last to receive the highest mark of honour from the Annotations and Commentaries of a Warburton.

Among the names that have rescued the editorial office from contempt, we may, with strict impartiality, place Dr. Johnson's in the first rank. In spite of the envy of some malignant critics, and their ignorant abettors, who were content to echo their detractions—in spite even of

[1] Art. II. *The Plays of William Shakspeare*,[2] in Ten Volumes, with the Corrections and Illustrations of various Commentators: to which are added Notes by Samuel Johnson and Geo. Steevens. The Second Edition revised and augmented. 8vo. 10 Vols. 3*l.* 10*s.* Bound. Bathurst, &c.

[2] This mode of spelling the name of Shakspeare is adopted out of respect to an *autograph* of the poet affixed to his will preserved in the court of Canterbury. *A fac simile* of his hand-writing is given in this edition.

all that a Churchill himself could write to depreciate Dr. Johnson's claim to fame, yet he still commands the admiration of his country, and " bears his blushing honours thick about him," even in the very winter of his days. Nor will posterity censure the present age for having been too prodigal in its applause of this great man. His moral and critical writings will remain a perpetual monument of genius, industry, and learning.

Mr. Steevens's name seems to be the only one that deserved to be united with Dr. Johnson's in an edition of Shakspeare. To that acuteness of understanding, and elegance of taste, so necessary to form a true critic, he hath added that perseverance of investigation and accuracy of research, which were essential to a clear and minute illustration of a variety of passages in Shakspeare ; which owe all their force and beauty to some local and temporary circumstances. Of these circumstances former commentators were ignorant, in a very great degree, through a want of those resources of which Mr. Steevens hath availed himself equally to the gratification of the Reader, and the credit of his own sagacity and diligence.

Of the former edition of this very curious and elaborate work we gave some account in our Review for December, 1773. As that article may possibly be deemed too brief and general for a work of such extent, our account of the present edition will be more extended, and more particular.

The several prefaces, which had been prefixed to Shakspeare by his various editors, are here reprinted, as in the former edition, together with Mr. Steevens's original advertisement to the Reader, enlarged by a curious extract from a satirical pamphlet, written by Decker, in the year 1609 ; and entitled " The Gul's Horn-Book." The extract is given with a view to afford the Reader a more complete idea of the customs peculiar to our ancient theatres than is generally entertained. The chapter from whence this extract is taken, is entitled " How a Gallant should behave himself in a Play-House." A vein of great humour and irony runs through it. Decker's Gallant was a kind of gentleman-bully, whose ambition it was to be signalized by some notable exploits—commonly called by

our Oxford heroes of the present day —*kicking up a d——d dust.* Such gallants, as the old satirist calls them, make up by noise what they want in wit : and he therefore humorously assures them, that " it will crowne them with rich commendation to laugh aloud in the midst of the most serious and saddest scene of the terriblest tragedy : and to let that clapper, their tongue, be tossed so high, that all the house may ring of it."

Decker's Gallant bears a strong resemblance of our modern choice spirits, who find it an easier task to raise a riot at a playhouse, than to decide with judgment on the respective merits of authors or actors. Their absurdities, however, were manifested in different modes. Among other fooleries, Decker rallies them for card-playing, to amuse the time before the play began.

To the present edition is added a curious extract from Mr. Grainger's Biographical History of England, relating to the portraits of Shakspeare. They are distinctly enumerated, and their respective merits are judiciously discussed. This edition is embellished also with two prints of Shakspeare. The first is copied from an engraving of *Martin Droeshont*, and was originally impressed on the title-page of the folio edition of Shakspeare, by Heminge and Condell. The second is a copy of the portrait prefixed to his poems, published in 12mo, in 1640. These two prints are indeed much unlike one another in point of expression. The first is most esteemed, as it carries stronger marks of dignity and elevation of mind than the latter, and seems best to suit the genius of the man :—but chiefly is it valued for the testimony which Ben Jonson bore to it on account of its resemblance to his friend Shakspeare ; and

> " Wherein (says he) the graver had a strife
> " With nature to outdo the life."

This was the testimony of a man who had known Shakspeare too well to have been deceived : and for the sake of complimenting the engraver's art, would scarcely have ventured on an assertion that, if not true, could have been so easily, and by such numbers falsified. Mr. Grainger informs us, as a corroborating proof of the exactness of

Droeshout's engraving, that "the author of a letter from Stratford upon Avon, printed in the Gentleman's Magazine, about twenty years since, informs us, that this head is as much like his monumental effigy, as a print can be."

Mr. Steevens, in the edition of 1773, had (as he frankly acknowledges) given inadvertently a wrong account of the folio edition of 1632. He had given it a similar character with the 3d and 4th impressions which were all printed in the course of the last century, from 1623 to 1685. The two last editions he still considers as "little better than waste paper; for they differ only from the preceding ones by a larger accumulation of errors." But on maturer examination he retracts his former charge against the second edition of 1632, and informs us that "it is not without its value; for though it be in some cases more incorrectly printed than the preceding one, it has likewise the advantage of various readings, which are not merely such as a reiteration of copies will naturally produce. The curious examiner of Shakspeare's text, who possesses the first of these, ought not to be unfurnished with the second." We thought it not amiss to transcribe this note as a proof of Mr. Steevens's candour, and that the possessors of the old edition of 1632 may know what value to set on it.

The other additions to the present work consist of a "list of plays, altered from Shakspeare, by Sir William Davenant, Lord Lansdowne, Tate, Betterton, Dennis, Sheffield D. of Bucks, Dryden, Otway, Garrick, Cibber, Sheridan, Colman, and others; with a list of detached pieces of criticism on Shakspeare and his editors,"—beginning with Rymer's "Short View of Tragedy," printed in 1693, and ending with Voltaire's "Letter to the French Academy," in 1777. "Next follow such extracts of entries on the books of the Stationers Company," as bear any reference to Shakspeare's plays, or the plays of other authors, that were published with the same titles that he himself had adopted.

"It is worth remark, says Mr. Steevens, that on these books of the Stationers Company, *Titus Andronicus*, *Venus and Adonis*, two parts of *King Henry VI.*, *Locrine*, *Widow of Watling-Street*, *King Richard II.*, *King Richard the IIId.*,

King Henry II., *&c.* are the first performances attributed to Shakspeare. Thus might the progress of his dramatic art be ascertained, were we absolutely sure that his productions were set down in chronological arrangement on these records of ancient publication. It may be added, that although the interests of playhouses had power to suspend privately the printing of his theatrical pieces, they could not have retarded the appearance of his poems; and we may therefore justly date the commencement of his authorship from the time when the first of them came out, *viz.* his *Venus and Adonis*, when he was in the 29th year of his age. In the dedication of this poem to the earl of Southampton, Shakspeare calls it, 'The first Heir of his Invention.'

"Of all his undisputed plays, the only one omitted in the books of the Stationers Company, is *King John*. The same attention to secure a lasting property in the works of Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, doth not appear to have been exerted; as of the former I have met with no more than seven or eight entries, and of the latter a still less considerable number. Beaumont died in 1615, Fletcher in 1625, and Jonson in 1637. My researches, however, were not continued below the year 1632, the date of the second edition of Shakspeare.

"Let it be added to the praises of our Author, that if he did not begin to write till 1593, nor ceased till within three years of his death, which happened in 1616; in the course of twenty years he had produced no less than thirty-five plays, admitting that the eight others (amongst which is to be reckoned *Titus Andronicus*) were spurious. I seize this opportunity, however, to express my doubts concerning all but the last mentioned piece and *Locrine*. Locrine hath only the letters W.S. prefixed to it; and exhibits internal proofs that it was not only the composition of a scholar but of a pedant. Neither has it ever yet been sufficiently proved, that it was once customary to set the names of celebrated living authors at full length in the title-pages to the works of others, or to enter them under these false colours in the books of Stationers Hall. Such frauds, indeed, have been attempted at a later period, but with little success. The most inconsiderable of all the

pieces rejected by the editors of Shakspeare, is the *Yorkshire Tragedy;* and yet in 1608 it was both registered and published with his name. At this time too, he was probably in London, presiding at the Globe Theatre, in consequence of the licence granted by king James I. to him and his fellow-comedians in 1603. The *Yorkshire Tragedy* is only one out of four short dramas which were exhibited for the entertainment of a single evening, as the title-page informs us; and perhaps would have been forgotten, with the other three, but that it was known to have been the work of our celebrated Author. Such miscellaneous representations were not uncommon, and the Reader will find a specimen of them in the tenth volume of Mr. Seyward's edition of Beaumont and Fletcher. Shakspeare, who hath expressed such a solicitude that his *Clowns should speak no more than what was set down for them*, would naturally have taken some opportunity to shew his impatience at being rendered answerable, in a still more decisive manner, for entire compositions which were not his own. It is possible, likewise, that the copies of the plays omitted in the first folio, had been already disposed of to proprietors, out of whose hands they could not be redeemed: or if Heminge and Condell were [1] discerning friends to the reputation of their associate, conscious, as they might have been, that such pieces were his, they would have omitted them by design, as inferior to his other productions. From this inferiority, and from a cast of style occasionally different, nothing relative to their authenticity can, with exactness, be inferred; for, as Dr. Johnson very justly observes on a similar occasion, 'There is little resemblance between the first works of Raphael and the last.' But could it even be proved that these rejected pieces were not among the earliest effusions of Shakspeare, such proofs would by no means affect their authenticity; as both Dryden and Rowe, after having written their best plays, are known to have produced others, which reflect a very inconsiderable degree of honour on their memory."

[1] If the original editors of Shakspeare *were discerning friends to the reputation of their associate*, how came *Titus Andronicus* to find a place amongst his works in their own edition? *Rev.*

These reasonings in favour of the rejected plays, which had been originally attributed to Shakspeare, are exceedingly plausible; but whether they will be considered as decisive, we presume not to determine. Perhaps they have been rejected too precipitately, through an implicit dependence on the authority of Mr. Pope; whose reasons for their total omission were, however, very far from being conclusive.

The most curious and important supplement to the prefaces of the former edition, is "an attempt to ascertain the order in which the plays attributed to Shakspeare were written," by Mr. Malone. Of this "attempt," Mr. Steevens makes the following handsome acknowledgment. "By the aid of the registers at Stationers Hall, and such internal evidences as the pieces themselves supply, he (Mr. Malone) hath so happily accomplished his undertaking, that he only leaves me the power to thank him for an arrangement which I profess my inability either to dispute or to improve."

Of the success of this undertaking Mr. Malone speaks in the following modest and candid manner: "After the most diligent enquiries, very few particulars have been recovered respecting Shakspeare's private life or literary history; and while it hath been the endeavour of all his editors and commentators to illustrate his obscurities, and to regulate and correct his text, no attempt hath been made to trace the progress and order of his plays. Yet, surely, it is no incurious speculation to mark the [1] gradations by which he rose from mediocrity to the summit of excellence: from artless and uninteresting dialogues, to those unrivalled compositions which have rendered him the delight and wonder of successive ages.

"The materials for ascertaining the order in which his plays were written, are indeed so few, that it is to be feared nothing very decisive can be produced on this sub-

[1] It is not pretended that a regular scale of gradual improvement is here presented to the Public: or that if even Shakspeare himself had left us a chronological list of his dramas, it would exhibit such a scale. All that is meant is, that as his knowledge increased, and he became more conversant with the stage and with life, his performances, *in general*, were written more happily, and with greater art.

ject. In the following attempt to trace the progress of his dramatic art, probability alone is pretended to. The silence and inaccuracy of those persons who, after his death, had the revisal of his papers, will, perhaps, for ever prevent our attaining to any thing like proof on this head. Little then remains, but to collect into one view, from his several dramas, and from the ancient tracts in which they are mentioned, or alluded to, all the circumstances that can throw any light on this new and curious inquiry. From these circumstances, and from the entries in the books of the Stationers Company, extracted, and now first published by Mr. Steevens (to whom every admirer of Shakspeare has the highest obligations), it is probable that the plays attributed to our Author were nearly written in the following succession, which, though it cannot at this day be ascertained to be their true order, may yet be considered as approaching nearer to it than any which has been observed in the various editions of his works. The *rejected* plays are here enumerated with the rest; but no opinion is thereby meant to be given concerning their authenticity. Of the nineteen genuine plays, which were not printed in our Author's life-time, the majority of them were, I believe, late compositions. The following arrangement is, in some measure, formed on this idea.

The dates of the several plays are arranged by Mr. Malone in the following order:

N.B.—The *rejected* plays, which had been admitted in the 3d and 4th editions of the last century, and also by Mr. Rowe, are, in the following list, marked by *Italics;* and those which were not printed till after the Author's death, and made their first appearance in the folio edition of his plays, in 1623, are distinguished by an asterisk.

1. *Titus Andronicus*, 1589. (This play, though admitted by all the Editors, yet is generally supposed to be spurious.) 2. Love's Labour Lost, 1591. 3. * First Part of King Henry VI. 1591. 4. Second Part of Henry VI. 1591. 5. Third Part of ditto, 1592. 6. *Pericles*, 1592. 7. *Locrine*, 1593. 8. * The Two Gentlemen of Verona, 1593. 9. * The Winter's Tale, 1594. 10. Midsummer Night's Dream, 1595. 11. Romeo and Juliet, 1595. 12. * The

Comedy of Errors, 1596. 13. Hamlet, 1596. 14. * King John, 1596. 15. King Richard the IId. 1597. 16. King Richard the IIId. 1597. 17. First Part of King Henry IV. 1597. 18. Merchant of Venice, 1598. 19. * All's Well that Ends Well, 1598. 20. *Sir John Oldcastle*, 1598. 21. Second Part of King Henry IV. 1598. 22. King Henry V. 1599. 23. *The Puritan*, 1600. 24. Much-ado about Nothing, 1600. 25. * As you like it, 1600. 26. Merry Wives of Windsor, 1601. 27. * King Henry VIII, 1601. 28. *Life and Death of Lord Cromwell*, 1602. 29. Troilus and Cressida, 1602. 30. * Measure for Measure, 1603. 31. * Cymbeline, 1604. 32. *The London Prodigal*, 1605. 33. King Lear, 1605. 34. * Macbeth, 1606. 35. * The Taming of the Shrew, 1606. 36. * Julius Cæsar, 1607. 37. *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608. 38. * Anthony and Cleopatra, 1608. 39. * Coriolanus, 1609. 40. * Timon of Athens, 1610. 41. * Othello, 1611. 42. * The Tempest, 1612. 43. * Twelfth Night, 1614.

We must not follow this ingenious Writer through every part of his elaborate enquiry,—in which we find much curious criticism interspersed with a number of entertaining anecdotes:—but we cannot take our leave of Mr. Malone, without presenting a specimen or two of his manner of treating the subject. We shall produce his account of *Titus Andronicus* and Macbeth.

"In what year our Author began to write for the stage, or which was his first performance, has not been hitherto ascertained. And indeed we have so few lights to direct our enquiries, that any speculation on this subject may appear an idle expence of time. But the method which has been already marked out, requires that such facts should be mentioned as may serve in any manner to elucidate these points.

"Shakspeare was born on the 23d of April 1564, and was probably married in, or before September 1582; his eldest daughter Susanna having been baptised on the 26th of May 1583. At what time he left Warwickshire, or was first employed, in the play-house, tradition doth not inform us. However, as his son Samuel and his daughter Judith were baptised at Stratford Feb. 2, 1584–5, we

may presume that he had not left the country at that time.

"He could not have wanted an easy introduction to the theatre, for Thomas Green, a celebrated comedian, was his townsman, and, probably, his relation; and Michael Drayton was likewise born in Warwickshire: the latter was nearly of his own age, and both were in some degree of reputation soon after the year 1590. If I were to indulge a conjecture, the middle of the year 1591 I should name as the era when our Author commenced a writer for the stage; at which time he was somewhat more than twenty-seven years of age. The reasons that induce me to fix on that period are these: In Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetry*, published in 1586, we meet with the names of most of the celebrated poets of that time, particularly those of George Whetstone and Antony Munday, who were *dramatic* writers; but we find no trace of our Author, or any of his works. Three years afterwards Puttenham printed his *Art of English Poesy*; and in that work also we look in vain for the name of Shakspeare. Sir John Harrington, in his *Apologie for Poetry*, prefixed to the *Translation of Ariosto* (which was entered in the Stationers' books, Feb. 26, 1590–1, in which year it was printed), takes occasion to speak of the theatre, and mentions some of the celebrated dramas of that time; but says not a word of Shakspeare or any of his plays. If even *Love's Labour Lost* had then appeared, which was probably his first dramatic composition, is it imaginable that Harrington should have mentioned the Cambridge *Pedantius*, and *The Play of the Cards* (which last he tells us was a *London* comedy), and have passed by, unnoticed, the new prodigy of the dramatic world?

"However, that Shakspeare had commenced a writer for the stage, and even excited the jealousy of his contemporaries, before Sept. 1592, *is now decisively proved* by a passage, extracted by Mr. Tyrwhitt from Robert Greene's Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance,[1]

[1] The passage to which this observation refers is too curious to be omitted; and we shall present our Readers with Mr. Tyrwhitt's own account of it—"Though the objections which have been raised to the

in which there is an evident allusion to our Author's *name*, as well as to one of his plays.

"At what time soever he became acquainted with the theatre, we may presume that he had not composed his first play *long before it was acted*; for being early encumbered with a young family, and not in very affluent circumstances, it is improbable that he should have suffered it to lie in his closet, without endeavouring to derive from it some profit; and in the miserable state of the drama in those days, the meanest of his genuine plays must have been a valuable acquisition, and would hardly have been *refused* by any of the managers of our ancient theatres.

"*Titus Andronicus* appears to have been *acted* before any other play attributed to Shakspeare: and, therefore, as it hath been admitted into all the editions of his works, whoever might have been the writer of it, it is entitled to the first place in this general list of his dramas. From Ben Jonson's induction to *Bartholomew Fair* 1614, we learn that *Andronicus* had been exhibited twenty-five or thirty years before; that is, at the lowest computation, in 1589: or, taking a middle period (which is perhaps more just), in 1587. In our Author's dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to lord Southampton, in 1593, he tells us, as

genuineness of the *three plays of Henry* VIth have been fully considered and answered by Dr. Johnson, it may not be amiss to add here, from a contemporary writer, a passage which not only points at Shakspeare as the author of them, but also shews, that however meanly we may now think of them, in comparison with his later productions, they had, at the time of their appearance, a sufficient degree of excellence to alarm the jealousy of the older playwrights. The passage, to which I refer, is in a pamphlet entitled *Greene's Groatsworth of Witte*, supposed to have been written by that voluminous author Robert Greene, M.A. and said in the title page to be *published at his dying request*; probably about 1592. The conclusion of this piece is an address to his brother-poets, to dissuade them from writing any more for the stage, on account of the ill-treatment which they were used to receive from the players. "Trust them not (says he), for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygres Head wrapt in a Player's Hyde*, supposes that he is as well able to bombaste out a blancke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes Fac-totum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in the countrey." There can be no doubt, I think, that *Shakspeare* is alluded to by the expression *Shake-scene*, or that his *Tygres Head wrapt in a* Player's *Hyde* is a parody upon the following line of York's speech to Margaret, in Third Part of Henry VI. Act. I. Scene 4th.

"*Oh Tygres Heart wrapt in a Woman's Hide!*"

Mr. Steevens hath observed, that *that* poem was "*the first Heir of his* Invention," and if we were sure that it was published immediately, or soon after it was written, it would at once prove *Titus Andronicus* not to be the production of Shakspeare, and nearly ascertain the time when he commenced a dramatic writer. But we do not know what interval might have elapsed between the composition and the publication of that poem. There is indeed a passage in the dedication already mentioned; which, if there were not such decisive evidence on the other side, might induce us to think that he had not written in 1593 any piece of more dignity than a love-poem; or at least any on which he himself set a value. "If (says he to his noble patron) your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised; and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honoured you with some *graver* labour."

"A book entitled "*A Noble Roman History of Titus Andronicus*" (without any Author's name) was entered at Stationers Hall, Feb. 6, 1593–4. This I suppose to have been the play as it was printed in that year, and acted (according to Langbaine, who alone appears to have seen the first edition) by the servants of the earls of Pembroke, Derby, and Essex.

"Mr. Pope thought that *Titus Andronicus* was not written by Shakspeare; because Ben Jonson spoke slightingly of it while Shakspeare was yet living. *This* argument perhaps will not bear a very strict examination. If it were allowed to have any validity, many of our Author's genuine productions must be excluded from his works; for Ben has ridiculed several of his dramas in the same piece in which he hath mentioned *Andronicus* with contempt.

"It has been said, that Francis Meres, who, in 1598, enumerated this among our Author's plays, might have been misled by a title-page: but we may presume, that he was informed, or deceived, by some other means; for Shakspeare's name is not in the title page of that in 1611; and therefore we may conclude, it was not in the title-page of the edition of 1594, of which the other was probably a re-impression.

"However (notwithstanding the authority of Meres), the high antiquity of the piece, its entry on the Stationers books, without the name of the writer, the regularity of the versification, the dissimilitude of the style from that of those plays which were undoubtedly composed by our Author, and the tradition mentioned by Ravenscroft, at a period when some of his contemporaries had not been long dead (viz. 'that he had been told by some, anciently conversant with the stage, that *Andronicus* was not originally Shakspeare's, but brought by a private author to be acted, and that he only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters.')—these circumstances render it highly improbable, that this play should have been the composition of Shakspeare."

These remarks are acute and judicious, and conclude much against the authenticity of this play: and yet, in spite of evidence internal and external, a certain painful collator of particles and commas hath, through an old pair of spectacles, which Tom Hearne had thrown aside as good for nothing, discovered beauties and excellencies in *Titus Andronicus*, which had hitherto been *invisible to mortal sight*. On this wonderful discovery, Mr. Malone indulges himself in a little pleasantry: for which we refer to the book.

Concerning the date of Macbeth, Mr. Malone offers the following ingenious conjectures.

"From a book entitled *Rex Platonicus*, cited by Dr. Farmer, we learn, that King James, when he visited Oxford in 1605, was addressed by three students of St. John's College, who personated the three Weird Sisters; and recited a short dramatic poem, founded on the prediction of those *Sybils* (as the Author calls them), relative to Banquo and Macbeth.

"Dr. Farmer is of opinion, that this little piece preceded Shakspeare's play; a supposition which is strengthened by the silence of the Author of *Rex Platonicus*, who, if Macbeth had then appeared on the stage, would probably have mentioned something of it. It should likewise be remembered, that there subsisted, at that time, a spirit of opposition between the regular players and the academics

of the two Universities; the latter of whom frequently acted plays both in Latin and English, and seem to have piqued themselves on the superiority of their exhibitions to those of the established theatres. Wishing, probably, to manifest this superiority to the Royal Pedant, it is not likely, that they would chuse for a collegiate interlude, a subject which had already appeared on the public stage, with all the embellishments that the magic hand of Shakspeare could bestow.

"This tragedy contains an allusion to the union of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, under one sovereign, and also, to the cure of the King's-Evil by the Royal touch (Act IV. Scene I, II.); but in what year that pretended power was assumed by King James I. is uncertain. Macbeth was not entered on the Stationers books, nor printed, till 1623.

At the time when Macbeth was supposed to have been written, the subject, it is probable, was considered as a topic the most likely to conciliate the favour of the court. In the additions to *Warner's Albion's England*, which were first printed in 1606, the story of the *Three Fairies or Weird Elves*, as he calls them, is shortly told; and King James's descent from Banquo carefully deduced.

"Ben Jonson, a few years afterwards, paid his court to his Majesty, by his *Masque of Queens*, presented at Whitehall, Feb. 12, 1609, in which he hath given a minute detail of all the magic rites that are recorded by King James, in his book of *Dæmonologie*, or by any other author ancient or modern.

"Mr. Steevens hath lately discovered a MS. play, entitled the Witch, written by Thomas Middleton, which renders it questionable, whether Shakspeare was not indebted to that author for the first hint of the magic introduced in this tragedy.—The songs beginning *Come away*, &c. and *Black spirits*, &c. being found at full length in Middleton's play, while only the two first words of them are printed in Macbeth, favour the supposition, that Middleton's piece preceded that of Shakspeare, the latter, it should seem, thinking it unnecessary to set down verses which were probably well known, and perhaps then in the

possession of the managers of the Globe Theatre. The high reputation of Shakspeare's performances likewise strengthens this conjecture; for it is very improbable, that Middleton, or any other poet of that time, should have ventured into those regions of fiction, in which our Author had *already* expatiated."

Mr. Steevens hath produced some curious extracts from this old play, which, we are informed, "will be published *entire*, for the satisfaction of the intelligent readers of Shakspeare."

By the very numerous quotations from old plays, ballads, histories, and romances, which Mr. Steevens hath produced, to illustrate some obscure passages in Shakspeare, a hasty and superficial critic might be tempted to question his peculiar, and almost unrivalled claim to originality: or if he were not so presumptuous as to question what the united suffrages of the best judges have allowed him, yet, at least, to qualify it by a colder praise than hath been hitherto bestowed on him. It must, indeed, be acknowledged by the most enthusiastic admirer of this immortal poet, that many of his plays, which owe their chief beauties to a boldness of invention, and a wildness of fancy, appear to have been in some degree indebted, either for plot, management, or machinery, to other writers. This remark receives confirmation from the discovery of Middleton's MS. play, above mentioned; in which, somewhat of that imagery that hath equally astonished, charmed, and terrified us, in the closet and the theatre, in the tragedy of Macbeth, may be traced out by a curious and discerning eye. How far Shakspeare was indebted to old English translations of the Greek and Latin classics—to Stow, Hall, Holingshed, and the translator of Hector Boethius's History of Scotland, hath been sufficiently noticed by preceding critics. It was, indeed, left to the indefatigable Mr. Steevens, to turn over a thousand dull and insignificant entries at Stationers Hall, in order to discover all the *minutiæ* of dates and titles which bore any reference to Shakspeare; and after a most laborious research, with an eye (as Dr. Johnson says of the *sagacious* Mr. B.——'s) that looked *keenly on vacancy*, he made a discovery of

several plays, on similar subjects with many of Shakspeare's which were prior to his, and even before his first entrance on the stage. All this may be true: nay, we have not a doubt of the fact. But nothing that hath yet been produced of Shakspeare's plagiarism, can deprive him of one tittle of his almost prescriptive right to all the honours of a great and unequalled original. The most captious critic, in the fulness of a desire to find fault, must allow, that Shakspeare's borrowed ornaments sit on him with a more natural grace and elegance than on their original proprietors. They are so exquisitely disposed of—so nicely blended with what is unquestionably his own property, that we know not where the borrowed parts end, nor where the original ones begin. The whole appears to be the production of the same master: *simplex duntaxat et unum*. We may, perhaps, assert, that in the general and more disgraceful sense of the word, this great poet never appears to have borrowed at all. He had read indeed; and his capacious mind was stored with a vast treasure of knowledge and observation. He had reflected on the great acquisitions he had made; had arranged them in his mind with much care and exactness. By these means, they became incorporated with his own natural, and in the truest sense of the term, *unborrowed* reflections. Hence it is obvious to suppose, that when he addressed himself to composition, he drew indiscriminately from the immense storehouse of his mind, whatever was fit for his purpose, whether of native or acquired knowledge—indifferent, and perhaps unconscious, whose property any part of it might be. This is not an uncommon circumstance. The utmost circumspection cannot always prevent its occurrence: for it is difficult to distinguish the power of invention from that of reflection. Fancy may claim for its own what had been first only adopted by memory.

Shakspeare hath the admirable art not only of applying his borrowed parts with propriety, but of embellishing and improving them. He adds to them a grace and dignity, which, at least, are his own. In the tragedy of Macbeth, his spirits, though similar in name to those of Middleton (particularly the presiding Deity hath in each the Grecian

name of Hecate), yet they differ from Middleton's in almost every essential attribute of conduct and character. Middleton's fairies are light, frisky beings, who wreak their malice on small culprits, and revenge little mischiefs. Shakspeare's are brought on the stage for purposes of higher account. They are to be the instruments of dire events—revolutions that were worthy the council of the Gods. This great object was of sufficient importance to excuse the interposition of supernatural beings. Hence, what Middleton invented to amuse, Shakspeare's more daring genius improved into an instrument of terror. This he hath accomplished with wonderful propriety: and we admire that skill and power which, on so slight a basis, could erect such a stupendous fabric.

Shakspeare's witches seem to be fully aware of the high importance of the subject of their incantations, by the number of the ingredients which they throw into the cauldron. Hecate is anxious for its success; and enquires into the particulars of the infernal mixture. They solemnly cast in their respective share of the composition: but instead of *the gristle of a man hang'd after sun-set* (*i.e.* a murderer, according to Middleton's play) they throw in *the grease that's sweaten from a murderer's gibbet:* and instead of Middleton's *fat of an unbaptized child*, they mix with the other ingredients of the cauldron, *the finger of birth-strangled babe.* Perhaps it may be impossible to describe the precise difference in the energy of these expressions. It must be felt from their several effects on the imagination. Considered in that view, the difference is very great: at least, it is felt to be such by us; and from a variety of circumstances of this kind, we are persuaded, that Shakspeare never sat down to write from another's copy. His language was the natural expression of a mind fraught with the boldest conceptions, and the most lively ideas: and when the whole of Middleton's play is published, perhaps our convictions will be still farther corroborated, of Shakspeare's having never considered it as a *model* for his scene of the witches in Macbeth, however he might have fallen on some particular modes of expression, that were scarce avoidable on the same subject.

The scene of the witches with Macbeth, after their incantations at the cauldron, is inexpressibly solemn: and the expedient of shewing a future race of Kings, wonderfully striking and sublime. Distance and obscurity assist and increase that terror which is one capital source of sublimity. But as if that were not sufficient, others are shewn in a glass, as the descendents of Banquo, whose ruin he was contriving. To see them exalted to the height of power and authority, was an object to strike ambition to madness. . . . We have made these remarks, in order to evince how essentially different the gay witches of Middleton are from the awful *sisters* of Macbeth.

In a future Review, we will present our readers with some curious illustrations of difficult passages in the plays, which cannot fail of being acceptable to all the lovers of Shakspeare.

April 1780 Vol. 62 p. 257

We now sit down to fulfil our engagement to the Public by presenting them with such extracts from the annotations on Shakspeare, as, we presume, cannot fail of proving satisfactory to the admirers of that illustrious Bard.

In the first Scene, Act II of the Tempest, Prospero says to Ferdinand,

—"for I
"Have given you a *third* of my own life."

Mr. Theobald was dissatisfied with the reading, and altered the text, by substituting *thread* for third. Dr. Johnson restored the old reading, and apprehends that Prospero, by calling his daughter Miranda "a *third* of his own life," alludes to some logical distinction of causes, making her the final cause. "Though this conjecture (says Mr. Hawkins) be very ingenious, I cannot think the poet had any such idea in his mind. The word *thread* was formerly spelt *third*, as appears from the following passage, in the comedy of Mucidorus (1619):

"Long maist thou live, and when the sisters shall decree
"To cut in twain the twisted *third* of life
"Then let him die," etc.

Mr. Tollet adopts Mr. Theobald's emendation, and observes, that "Prospero considers himself as the *stock* or *parent-tree*, and his daughter as a *fibre* or *portion* of himself, and for whose benefit he himself lives. In this sense the word is used in *Markham's English Husbandman* (1635), "Every branch and *third* of the root," &c. Mr. Steevens confirms Mr. Hawkins's observation concerning the ancient method of spelling the word *thread*, by a curious quotation from an old poem, entitled, *Lingua*, published in 1607 :

[1] "For as a subtle spider closely sitting
"In center of her web that spreadeth round,
"If the least fly but touch the smallest *third*
"She feels it instantly."—

"The following quotation, however (continues Mr. Steevens), should seem to place the meaning beyond all dispute. In *Acolastus*, a comedy (1529), is this passage: "One of worldly shame's *children*, of his countenance, and *threde* of his body."

Our ingenious Editor hath well illustrated a passage in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, by a similar expression in a contemporary writer. Valentine says,

"Disdain to root the *summer swelling* flower."

"I once thought (says Mr. Steevens) that the poet had written *summer-smelling* flower: but the epithet which stands in the text I have since met with in the translation of Lucan by Sir Arthur Gorges (1614), B.VIII. P. 554.

—'no Roman chieftaine should
"Come near to Nyles Pelasian mould
"But shun that *sommer-swelling* shore.'

"The original is—ripasque *æstate tumentes*, l. 829. *May* likewise renders it '*summer-swelled banks.*'—The *summer-swelling* flower, is the flower which swells in summer till it expands itself into bloom."

The implacable hatred that Shakspeare bore to Sir *Thomas Lucy*, the gentleman who prosecuted him for

[1] Pope in his Essay on Man describes the exquisite delicacy of the sense of feeling in the spider in a manner exactly similar to that of the old poet.

stealing deer out of his park at Charlcott in Warwickshire, hath been frequently taken notice of. His commentators are agreed in supposing that the poet hath burlesqued the Knight in the character of *Justice Shallow*, in the Merry Wives of Windsor. He hath given the same arms to both: and indulged himself in a vein of low humour on the similitude of the sound between *luce* and *louse*. (Vide the first Scene). "Mr. William Oldys (Norroy King at Arms, and well known from the share he had in compiling the *Biographia Britannica*) among the collections which he left for a *Life of Shakspeare*, observes that—"there was a very aged gentleman living in the neighbourhood of Stratford (where he died fifty years since) who had not only heard from several old people in that town, of Shakspeare's transgression; but could remember the first stanza of that bitter ballad, which repeating to one of his acquaintance, he preserved it in writing; and here it is, neither better nor worse, but faithfully transcribed from the copy which his relation very courteously communicated to me:

'A parliamente member, a justice of peace,
'At home a poore scare-crowe, at London an asse,
'If lowsie is Lucy, as some volke miscalle it,
'Then Lucy is lowsie whatever befall it.
'He thinks himself greate
'Yet an asse in his state;
'We allow by his ears, but with asses to mate.
'If Lucy is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,
'Then sing lowsie Lucy whatever befall it.'

"Contemptible (says our Editor) as this performance must now appear, at the time when it was written it might have had sufficient power to irritate a vain, weak, and vindictive magistrate; especially as it was affixed to some of his park gates, and consequently published among his neighbours.—It may be remarked likewise, that the jingle on which it turns occurs in the first scene of the Merry Wives of Windsor.

"I may add, that the veracity of the late Mr. Oldys hath never yet been impeached; and it is not very probable that a ballad should be forged, from which an undiscovered wag ould cderive no triumph over antiquarian credulity."

Mr. Steevens thinks " it not improbable that Shakspeare, in the character of Falstaff, might have aimed some strokes at the corpulence and intemperance of Ben Jonson. Mr. Oldys, in his MS. additions to Langbaine's Account of English dramatic poets, introduces the following story of Ben, which was found in a memorandum-book, written in the time of the civil wars by Mr. Oldisworth, who was Secretary to Philip Earl of Pembroke.

" Mr. Camden recommended him to Sir Walter Raleigh, who trusted him with the care and education of his eldest son, Walter, a gay spark, who could not brook Ben's rigorous treatment: but perceiving one foible in his disposition, made use of that to throw off the yoke of his government. This was an unlucky habit that Ben had contracted, through his love of jovial company, of being overtaken with liquor, which Sir Walter of all vices did most abominate, and hath most exclaimed against. One day when Ben had taken a plentiful dose, and was fallen into a sound sleep, young Raleigh got a great basket and a couple of men, who laid Ben in it, and then with a pole carried him to Sir Walter, telling him that their young master had sent home his tutor."

The expression, " *delighted* spirit," in the speech of Claudio, in *Measure for Measure*, hath been a subject of much conjecture amongst the critics. Sir Thomas Hanmer altered the word to *dilated*, " as if because the spirit in the body is said to be imprisoned, it was *crouded together* likewise, and so by death not only set free but expanded, which if true (says Dr. Warburton) would make it less sensible of pain." Dr. Johnson acknowledges that " the most plausible alteration is that which substitutes

—' the *benighted* spirit,'

alluding to the darkness always supposed in the place of future punishment." But however plausible this correction might appear, the learned Critic is not disposed to adopt it. He rather approves of an amendment proposed by Mr. Thirlby, who would substitute *delinquent* for *delighted*. Mr. Steevens, in the present edition, adopts Dr. Warburton's reading, and remarks that, " by *delighted*

spirit, is meant *the soul once accustomed to delight*, which of course must render the sufferings, afterwards described, less tolerable. Thus our Author calls youth, *blessed*, in a former scene, before he proceeds to shew its wants and its inconveniences." If Dr. Johnson's ingenious conjecture, that Shakspeare writ *blasted* and not *blessed* youth, be well grounded, Mr. Steevens must look elsewhere for an illustration: and we think he hath not far to go for it. The *sensible warm motion* (mentioned in the preceding line) is as much in contrast with the *kneaded clod*, as the *delighted spirit* with *fiery floods*. In this connection the meaning is perfectly obvious. The body, now warm with life, and active in its motions, will be reduced to a cold unanimated mass; and the spirit now delighted or pleased with its situation and enjoyments in the body, will exchange it for the regions of unknown and unutterable horror.

We have heard of some ingenious conjectures relating to the passage in question, that are not mentioned by any of the Editors of Shakspeare, and which we think carry more plausibility in them than the *dilated* of Sir Thomas Hanmer, or even the *delinquent* of a greater critic. A gentleman of great ingenuity hath proposed the following alteration:

> "Aye, but to die and go we know not where;
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot:
> This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod; and the *delated* spirit
> To bathe in fiery floods," &c.

Delated is a law-term for *arraigned* or *accused*. We think this correction a very elegant one. It gives a grandeur to the expression, and we should be very ready to adopt it, if we were not convinced that *delighted* was the original word, and that it admits of a very just and natural interpretation.

Another curious and ingenious gentleman, who thinks himself at liberty with the rest of the readers of Shakspeare, to speculate on a disputed passage, offers a modest query in the following manner: "May not *delighted* bear the same meaning as the word *alighted*. If so, the sense is obvious, and signifies a spirit *discharged* from the body."

It is curious to trace the progress of conjecture about the meaning of a passage, that in itself merits no attention, and would gain none, if it were found in any other author but Shakspeare. The critics have been much divided about the signification of an aukward, ill-sounding line in the speech of Leonato, in Much Ado about Nothing (Act V, Sc. I.). Speaking of a parent whose distresses might be supposed as " overwhelming " as his own, he says—

" If such a one will smile and stroke his beard ;
" And, *sorrow wag* ! cry ; hem, when he should groan—
" . . . bring him yet to me
" And I of him will gather patience."

Mr. Row, without any authority, altered the line to

. . . " And *hallow, wag,* cry hem," &c.

Mr. Theobald, on consulting the old quarto, the first and second folios, found that the line originally stood thus—

And *sorrow, wagge,* &c.

Hence he hit on an emendation ; without any great breach on the *letter* indeed ; but we think to the total annihilation of the *sense.* He would substitute *wage* for *wag ;* and by a licence of speech that no grammar will admit of he proposes to read the line—

And *sorrow wage,* cry hem, &c.

" i.e. (says he) if such a one will *combat with, strive against* sorrow, &c."

Sir Thomas Hanmer, and after him Dr. Warburton, read *waive* instead of *wag :*—by which term they mean—*put aside* or *shift off.*

Dr. Johnson is much dissatisfied with all the conjectures and emendations of preceding critics, and therefore reads the line as if it begun interjectionally :

. . . " Sorrow, wag ! " . . .

i.e. *begone,* or as one might say, *wag off !*

Mr. Tyrwhitt chuseth to read—

" And sorrow *gagge.*" . . .

i.e. stop the mouth of it.—But Mr. Warton dislikes *wage*

and *waive*, and *wag*, and *gag ;* and therefore (as he says) with the least departure from the old copies, and in entire conformity to the acknowledged and obvious sense of the passage, he ventures to correct it thus :

" If such a one will smile . . .
" And *sorrowing*, cry hem, &c.

Mr. Steevens is willing to let wag stand ; not indeed in the humble state of a verb ; but in the more important character of a noun substantive. But to effect this change, he must reduce the consequence of a neighbouring word, and *sorrow* must be converted into a *sorry* adjective. To be as serious as we can on this subject —though we think Mr. Steevens not quite serious himself —we shall only propose the ingenious Editor's correction, and leave it to our Readers to make what use they please of it :

" If such a one will smile . . .
" And, *sorry wag !* cry hem ! &c."

The following beautiful passage in the *Merchant of Venice* is, we think, judiciously explained by Mr. Malone :

" There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
" But in his motion like an angel sings,
" Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubims.
" Such harmony is in immortal souls ;
" But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
" Doth grossly close *it in*, we cannot hear it."

" Part of the difficulty of this passage *was* occasioned by a wrong punctuation.—The whole runs thus : *There is not one of the heavenly orbs, but sings as it moves, still quiring to the cherubims. Similar to the harmony they make is that of immortal souls.* Or in other words—*Each of us have as perfect harmony in our souls as the harmony of the spheres, inasmuch as we have the quality of being moved by sweet sounds : but our gross, terrestrial part, which environs us, deadens the sound, and prevents our hearing it.*"

This saves all the confusion which Dr. Warburton has introduced, which refers *souls* to *orbs ;* and not being able to reconcile them, changes the word to *sounds.*—" Doth close *it* in."—This Dr. Johnson conjectures to have been

the original reading, in opposition to the folios, which read, "Doth grossly close *in* it."

Mr. Malone supports his interpretation of the passage by a similar expression in Marston's *Antonio* and *Melido*, 1602.

> ". . . Heav'n's tones
> "Strike not such harmony to *immortal souls*,
> "As your accordance sweet my breast withal.

In a note on the word *fellow*, in Act IV, Sc. 1. of *Taming of the Shrew*, we have the following anecdote:

"In the old play called the *Return from Parnassus*, we have a curious passage, which shews the opinion of contemporaries concerning the *learning* of *Shakspeare*. The use of the word *fellow* brings it to my remembrance. Burbage and Kempe are introduced to teach the university-men the art of acting, and are represented (especially Kempe) as *leaden spouts—very illiterate*. 'Few of the university, says Kempe, pen plays well: they smell too much of that writer, *Ovid*, and that writer, *Metamorphosis*. —Why here's our *fellow Shakspeare* puts them all down.'"

On that obscure expression in *All's well that ends well* (Act I. Sc. II.)

> . . . "whose judgments are
> "Mere fathers of their garments, whose constancies
> "Expire before their fashions." . . .

We have the following ingenious conjecture, from Mr. Tyrwhytt. "I have a suspicion that Shakspeare wrote—'mere *feathers* of their garments': i.e. whose judgments are merely *parts* (and insignificant parts) *of their dress*, worn and laid aside as *feathers* are, from the mere love of novelty and change." The whole passage confirms this emendation.

In the same comedy we meet with the following very crabbed and almost unintelligible passage:

> *King.* "What dar'st thou venture?
> *Hel.* "Tax of impudence
> "A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame,
> "Traduc'd by odious ballads; my maiden's name
> "Sear'd otherwise; no worse of worst extended,
> "With vilest torture let my life be ended."

Dr. Johnson observes, that "this passage is apparently corrupt, and he entertained small hopes of rectifying it. The ingenious Mr. Malone hath remarked that the old copy reads—not *sear'd* but *scar'd*. The impression (says he) in my book, is very faint, but I think that is the word. In the same line it reads, not *no*, but *ne*—probably an error for *the*. I would wish to read and point the passage thus:

'. . . a divulged shame—
'Traduc'd, by odius ballads, my maiden's name;—
'*Scar'd* otherwise; *the worst of worst*, extended
'With vilest torture, let my life be ended.'

i.e. Let my maiden reputation become the subject of ballads—let it be otherwise *mangled*; and (what is *the worst of worst*—the consummation of misery) my body extended on the rack by the most cruel torture, let my life pay the forfeit of my presumption."

Dr. Johnson observed, in a former Edition of our Author, that a clown, in his dramas, is commonly taken for a *licensed jester* or *domestic fool*. This circumstance is confirmed by Mr. Steevens in a note on the 3d Scene, Act I. of the forementioned comedy, where the persons introduced are the Countess, Steward, and *Clown*.

This dialogue (says the Editor) or that in *Twelfth Night*, between *Olivia* and the *Clown*, seems to have been particularly censured by Cartwright in one of the copies of verses prefixed to the works of Beaumont and Fletcher:

"*Shakespeare* to thee was dull, whose best jest lies
"I'th' *Lady's* questions and the *Fool's* replies.
"Old fashion'd wit, which walk'd from town to town,
"In trunk hose, which our father's call'd the *Clown*."

In the MS. register of Lord Stanhope of Harrington, Treasurer of the chamber to King James I. from 1613 to 1616, are the following entries: "Tom Derry, his Majesty's *fool*, at 2*s*. per diem, 1615. Paid John Mawe for the diet and lodging of Thomas Derrie, her Majesty's *jester*, for thirteen weeks, 10*l*. 18*s*. 6*d*. 1616.

Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, says—"the Lady of the *Strachy* married the yeoman of the wardrobe."

Dr. Warburton, according to custom, alters the word, in

order, if possible, to extract some meaning out of it. He proposes to read *Trachy*, i.e. *Thrace*. This alteration, in the opinion of Dr. Johnson, added little to the credit of the text, whatever honour might accrue from it to the sagacity of the critic. He honestly confessed his ignorance of the circumstance or story to which the expression alluded. Mr. Smith conjectures that the word *Strachy* is derived from the Italian word *Straccio*, and signifies *clouts* or *tatters*. Mr. Steevens sports an hypothesis, for which he makes so ingenuous an apology, that we should be disposed to indulge him even if it were less probable than it is. He would alter, by a very easy transposition of a letter, *Strachy* to *Starchy;* i.e. the room in which linen underwent the once most complicated operation of *starching*. "The alteration (says he) was suggested to me by a typographical error in *The World toss'd at Tennis*, 1620, by Middleton and Rowley, where *straches* is printed for *starches*. I cannot fairly be accused of having dealt much in conjectural emendation, and therefore feel the less reluctance to hazard a guess on this desperate passage! Mr. Steevens indeed hath a right with the first critics on Shakspeare to amuse himself with the play of conjecture. His abilities entitle him to this indulgence in common with other commentators. But it is very seldom that he hath availed himself of the privilege. He adheres to the *simple text* as long as he finds any thing in it to support him: and when he departs from it, it is always with diffidence and reluctance.

The true reading of a most obscure passage in Act IV. Sc. III. of *Twelfth Night*, is, we think, restored by Mr. Tyrwhytt, and its meaning, with much probability, conjectured by the help of Sir John Hawkins's explanation of a term which occurs in it.

Sir Toby (drunk himself) says of Dick the surgeon (who, as the Clown informs him, had been "drunk above an hour agone")

> "Then he's a rogue, and a *passy-measure pavin:*
> "I hate a drunken rogue." . . .

Passy-measure is a corruption of the Italian word *passamezzo:* it was a favourite air in the reign of Queen Eliza-

beth. The *pavan*, from *pavo*, a peacock, is a grave and majestic dance. The method of dancing it was anciently by gentlemen dressed with a cap and sword—by those of the long robe in their gowns—by princes in their mantles—and by ladies in gowns with long trains, the motion whereof in the dance resembled that of a peacock's tail.

By the assistance of the above explanation, given by Sir John Hawkins, " I think (says Mr. Tyrwhytt) I now see the meaning of this passage. The second folio reads—

> . . . '*after* a passy-measure pavin'—

So that I should imagine the following regulation of the whole speech would not be far from the truth :

> " Then he's a rogue :—*after* a passy-measure *or* a pavin
> " I hate a drunken rogue."

i.e. *next* to a passy-measure or a pavin I hate a drunkard. It is in character that Sir Toby Belch should express a strong dislike of *serious* dances, &c. such as the *passamezzo* and the pavan are described to be."

Mr. Steevens hath restored the true reading of a corrupted passage in Act I. Sc. II. of the tragedy of Macbeth :

> " Till he disbursed at St. Colmes' *kill isle.*"

This is very erroneous, though adopted by all the modern editors. The folio reads

> . . . at Saint Colmes' ynch.

i.e. *Colmes Inch*, or as it is now called *Inchcomb*, a small island lying in the Firth of Edinburgh, with an abbey upon it, dedicated to St. Columb, called by Cambden *Inch Colum*, or the *Isle of Columba. Colum kill* is quite a different island. This latter was the very celebrated *Iona*, that was anciently the residence of an abbot, and afterwards an episcopal see. It was noted for being the burial-place of the kings of Ireland, Scotland, and Norway. It was the seat of learning to the inhabitants of the northern countries ; and the illustrious school from whence issued some of the greatest ornaments of the church in the middle

ages. This famous island is situated among the Hebrides, in the western seas, at a small distance from the isle of Mull. It was visited a few years since by Dr. Johnson; whose reflections on its ancient and present state are equally pious and rational, and every way worthy of the philosopher and the Christian.

With respect to the island situated in the Firth of Forth, near Edinburgh, called *Colmes' Inch*, Mr. Steevens produces the following passage from Holinshed, to illustrate the circumstance which this tragedy refers to in the line quoted above. "The Danes that escaped and got once to their ships obtained of Macbeth for a great sum of gold, that such of their friends as were slaine might be buried in Saint *Colmes' Inch*. In memory whereof many old sepultures are yet in the said Inch graven with the arms of the Danes." *Inch* or *Inshe*, in the Irish and Erse languages, signifies an island.[1] Vid. *Lhynd's Arch.*

In the concluding Scene of the first Act of this inimitable drama, Macbeth is represented as saying in a soliloquy—

> ". . . if the assassination
> "Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
> "With his surcease, success: "—

Dr. Johnson pleads for a transposition, and would give *success* the precedence of *surcease*, and, moreover, would substitute *its* for *his*. With this alteration he understands the passage thus—"if *its success* would ensure *its surcease*"—if being once done *successfully*, without detection, it could *fix a period* to all vengeance and enquiry—I would then venture on the deed, &c.

Mr. Steevens appears to be satisfied with this explanation of the passage, and gives his sanction to the alteration of *his* into *its*, by informing his readers that they are convertible terms. For our part we see no difficulty in the passage as it stands at present, and are utterly averse to

[1] *I-Colme-kill* (called by Bede *Hy*, and by other writers *Iona*) is mentioned also in this tragedy. Vid. Act II. Sc. ult. The body of Duncan is reported to be

> ". . . carried to Colmes' kill,
> "The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
> "And guardian of their bones."

all transpositions and alterations, unless absolutely necessary to clear up some obscurity, otherwise inscrutable or warranted by good authority, or very clear analogy. " With *his* surcease "—appears to us to mean simply and literally *the death of Duncan*—which event Macbeth was at that moment meditating. *He* and *his* are used in the same soliloquy, without any mention of the royal name: and in the abruptness with which it begins, and the manner in which Macbeth speaks of his guest, the poet discovers his vast knowledge of the most secret workings of the human heart, when it is full of some great but mischievous conceptions to which it wishes, and yet hesitates to give expression even in secret.

In a note on the word *Wassel*, made use of by Lady Macbeth in this last scene, Mr. Steevens observes, that " it was anciently called *was-haile*, and was an annual custom, according to Selden, observed in the country on the vigil of the new year, and had its beginning, as some say, from the words which Ronix, daughter of Hengist, used, when she drank to Vortigern—*loverd king, was-haile.* He answered her by direction of an interpreter—*Drinc-heile.*" —Wassel is a note of *health-wishing*, and is supposed to be a corruption of *wish-heil.*

On this word we beg leave to remark, that in the western counties, the custom of *wassel* is still preserved amongst the country people, with some particular ceremonies: not indeed on the eve of the new year, but on the eve of *Twelfth-day.* The *wassel-bowl*, as it is still called, is filled with ale or cyder, into which is thrown a toast with spice and sugar, and the first libation is made to the apple-trees. They are sprinkled with the liquor while a song is sung by the superstitious rustics, expressive of their wishes and hopes of a plentiful season. In towns the boys parade the streets on the eve of Twelfth day, and sing the *wassel-song.* It may be observed that they make use of the old Saxon word, *was-heil*, without any alteration, either of its original meaning or manner of pronunciation. It begins,

" *Was heil, was-heil* all o'er the town," &c.

i.e. *we wish health* to all the inhabitants.

In the *Archæologia* there is a particular account of an ancient chimney-piece, on which the *wassel-bowl* is carved, ornamented with leaves of the apple-tree. The gentleman who communicated his remarks on this remain of antiquity, conjectures that the *leaves* were emblematical of the good cyder which generally filled the bowl. We rather think they referred to the custom of carrying the bowl into the orchards to sprinkle the trees with the liquor it contained, whether it were cyder or ale.

Macbeth says to the Ghost—

> " If trembling I *inhabit*, then protest me
> " The baby of a girl."—

Mr. Pope alters the word to *inhibit*, and Dr. Warburton adopts the alteration. Dr. Johnson disapproves of this correction, and proposes to read

> . . . " I *evade* it." . . .

Mr. Steevens prefers Mr. Pope's emendation, and reads the line thus :

> " If trembling I inhibit *thee*, protest me."

To *inhibit* is to *forbid*. It is more than once made use of by Shakspeare.

Perhaps there is, after all, no necessity for any alteration. We know the licence of our Author with respect to his use of words. Scarcely a page but affords some instance or other of his giving a turn to words very different from that to which they had been accustomed by writers more attentive to the rules of grammatical phraseology. May not inhabit mean the same as *harbour* or *give habitation* to ? If so, the sense is obvious at first sight, and *trembling* is not to be understood as a participle, but as a substantive.

> " Augurs, and *understood relations*, have
> " By magot-pies, and choughs and rooks brought forth
> " The secret'st man of blood."

By *relation* Dr. Johnson understands the connection of effects with causes.

The old copy has the passage thus :

> " *Augures*, and understood relations," &c.

" Perhaps (says Mr. Steevens) we should read *auguries*, i.e. prognostications by means of omens. These, together with the connection of effects with causes, being understood, have been instrumental in divulging the most secret murders." This undoubtedly is the general sense of the passage. But we doubt whether Shakspeare by *relations* meant the *connection* between cause and effect, which our learned Editors suppose: or that by the expression he shewed such " profound knowledge of antiquity," as Dr. Warburton imagines he sees in it. *Understood relations* may mean no more than *accounts* of things discovered by magot pies, &c. and so well *understood* and interpreted as to be the means of bringing the most secret and disguised murderer to public infamy and punishment. To effect this sense, there must be a slight, but no unnatural transposition of the words. " Auguries and relations by magot-pies, &c. understood, have brought forth the secret'st man of blood."

The complaisance of our poet to King James hath been often noticed. In this tragedy the power of curing the *King's Evil* is spoken of as hereditary in the house of Banquo, from whence that monarch traced his descent. On the passage which immediately refers to this power, Mr. Steevens hath the following note: " The ingenious Editor of the *Household Book of the Fifth E. of Northumb.* very acutely observes, ' that the miraculous gift of curing the *evil* was left to be claimed by the Stuarts. Our ancient Plantagenets were humbly content to cure the cramp.' "

At the end of the first part of Henry IV. we have some curious observations, by Mr. Tollet, on the ancient *Morris Dancers*. These observations are accompanied with a plate (of which they are in a great measure explanatory) representing an antient window at Mr. Tollet's house, in which the figures, attitudes, and dresses, of the several dancers are delineated with great accuracy and elegance.

In a note on the celebrated exclamation of Richard, in the tragedy which goes by his name,

" A horse ! a horse ! my kingdom for a horse ! "—

Dr. Farmer observes, " that Burbage, the *alter Roscius*

of Camden, was the original Richard, as we may learn from a passage in the poems of Bp. Corbet, who introduces his host at Bosworth describing the battle:

> 'But when he would have said King Richard died,
> 'And call'd a horse! a horse! he Burbage cried.'"

In the prologue to Henry VIII there is a passage which lays much stress on the *truth* of the ensuing representation. This circumstance hath led Mr. Tyrrwhitt to conjecture (and we think with great appearance of probability) "that this play of Henry VIII is the very play mentioned by Sir Henry Wotton (in his letter of July 2, 1613. *Reliq. Wotton.* p. 425.) of a *new play*, acted by the King's players, at the Bank's Side, called *All is True;* representing some principal pieces of the reign of Henry VIII. The *extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty*, with which that play was set forth, and the particular *incident of certain cannons shot off at the King's entry to a masque at the Cardinal Wolsey's house* (by which the theatre was set on fire and burnt to the ground) are strictly applicable to the play before us. Mr. Chamberlaine, in *Winwood's Memorials*, vol. iii. p. 469, mentions the burning of the *Globe*, or Playhouse, on the *Bank Side*, on St. Peter's-Day, 1613, which, says he, fell out *by a peale of chambers*, that I know not on what occasion were to be used in the play. Ben Jonson, in his *Execration upon Vulcan*, says, they were *two poor chambers.* (See the stage direction in the play of Henry VIII. a little before the King's entrance, viz. 'Drum and trumpet-*chambers discharged.*') The Continuator of Stowe's *Chronicle*, relating the same incident (p. 1003.) says expressly, that it happened *at the play of Henry VIII.*"

In a MS. letter of Thomas Lorkin to Sir Thomas Puckering, dated London, *this last of June* 1613, this same fact is thus related. "No longer since, than *yesterday*, while Burbage his company were acting at the *Globe the play of Henry VIII.* and there shooting of certain *chambers* in way of triumph, the fire catched, &c. &c. MS. Harl. 7002."

(Mr. Steevens observes, that they were called chambers, because they were mere *chambers* to lodge powder. It is

the technical term for the cavity in ordnance which holds the *combustibles.*)

A passage in Coriolanus that had hitherto much puzzled the critics, is at length decisively explained, by Mr. Steevens.

> " Why in this *woolvish gown* should I stand here, &c."

Dr. Johnson explains it thus—" *rough, hirsute* gown." Mr. Steevens, on consulting the old copy, was surprised to find, that it was " woolvish *tongue.*" He conjectures with good reason, that *tongue* was misprinted for *toge*—the Roman *toga.* For, as Mr. Malone remarks, " the very same mistake of the printer happened in Othello, where we met with *tongued* instead of ' *toged* consuls.' Besides, as he farther observes, the old copy hath *in* and not *with,* which is a strong proof that the original word was not *tongue.*" But what shall we make of the epithet *woolvish ?* Luckily Mr. Steevens hath hit on its precise meaning, in an old black letter book, entitled a " Merye Jest of a man called *Howleglas.*" The hero of this merry jest binds himself to a taylor. He is set to work about a garment, " Then said the maister, I ment that you should have made up the russet gown, for a husbandman's gown is here called a *wolfe.*" " By a *woolvish toge* or *gown,* Shakspeare might have meant *Coriolanus,* to compare the dress of a Roman candidate to the coarse frock of a ploughman, who exposed himself to solicit the votes of his fellow rustics."

In the same play Menenius the friend of Coriolanus says,

> " Do not cry, havock, where you should but hunt
> " With modest warrant."

In this passage, Mr. Tyrrwhitt observes, that to cry *havock,* seems originally to have been a sporting phrase from *hafoc,* which, in Saxon, signifies a *hawk.* It was afterwards used in war. So in K. John,

> " . . . *Cry, havock,* kings."

And in Julius Cæsar,

> " *Cry, havock,* and let slip the dogs of war."

It seems to have been the signal for general slaughter, and is expressly forbidden in the *Ordinances des Batailles.* 9 R. II. Art. 10. "Item, que nul soit si hardy de crier *havock*, sur peine d'avoir la test coupe."

This expression, *cry havock*, reminds us of a similar passage in the concluding scene of Hamlet.

"This quarry cries on *havock*" . . .

Sir Thomas Hanmer reads—"cries *out* havock!" Dr. Johnson observes, that "to cry *on* was to *exclaim against.* I suppose (says he) when unfair sportsmen destroyed more *quarry* or *game* than was reasonable, the censure was to cry havock." This interpretation must undoubtedly be erroneous, if Mr. Tyrrwhitt's note, mentioned above, is allowed to have any weight. And, indeed, the obvious sense of every other passage, where this expression is made use of, confutes Dr. Johnson's supposition. We are surprised, that so accurate a critic as Mr. Steevens should have suffered Dr. Johnson's note to pass uncorrected. From his silence a person might be ready to infer his approbation.

The passage strikes us in this light. When Fortinbras beholds the slaughter which had been made of so many noble personages, the scenes of a bloody hunt rush on his imagination. To slaughtered game (called *quarry,* in old books of hunting and falconry) he compared the victims of that merciless hunter, death. Viewing them, he exclaims:

"This quarry cries, i.e. repeats, or cries in my ear, the bloody signal by which they fell as hunted game to the hounds of death—'On! Havock!'"

It may not be altogether unworthy of observation, that the terms commonly made use of in some parts of England by the gentlemen of the field to encourage the dogs, seems to have been derived from this antient signal of pursuit. "Hoik! Havoik!"

We would, with pleasure, give further specimens of the excellence and value of this new edition of Shakspeare, but we have already, perhaps, extended this article too far.

Oct. 1780 Vol. 63 p. 249[1]

This very curious Supplement to Shakspeare well deserves the rank it claims; for though it doth not place itself on an equal footing with the last edition of Johnson and Steevens, yet it merits a place next to it: and the admirers of Shakspeare will esteem themselves indebted to Mr. Malone for the pains he hath taken to gratify their curiosity.

The Editor's Advertisement is sensible and modest. He acknowledges his obligations to several learned and ingenious gentlemen, who assisted him with notes and observations to illustrate some obscure or interesting passages in Shakspeare. Sir William Blackstone for the first time appears here as a scholiast. His very judicious notes have no other distinction than the final letter of his name,—E. The other gentlemen whose assistance the Editor acknowledges are, Dr. Percy (Dean of Carlisle), the Rev. Dr. Farmer, the Rev. Mr. Henley, Mr. Tyrwhitt, and (above all) Mr. Steevens.

The Advertisement is succeeded by what Mr. Malone calls a *Prolegomena*, which contains a very curious delineation of the œconomy of our antient theatres, and is a farther proof how laborious and critical his enquiries have been in order to throw light on this obscure subject.

It may afford some amusement to our Readers, to present them with a general view of the ancient English stage, extracted from the *Prolegomena;* referring those who wish to be more minutely acquainted with particulars, and the resources from whence they were drawn, to the work itself.

Before Shakspeare, the drama was little cultivated, or understood. Not one play that was published before 1592 will bear a second reading. Exclusive of mysteries, moralities, translations, &c. there are but thirty-four pieces extant which were published before that period.

In the time of Shakspeare there were no less than ten

[1] Art. II. *Supplement to the Edition of Shakspeare's Plays* published in 1778, by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens. Containing additional Observations by several of the former Commentators: to which are subjoined, the genuine Poems of the same Author, and seven Plays that have been ascribed to him. With Notes by the Editor (Mr. Malone) and others. 2 vols. 8vo. (large). 18*s*. Boards. Bathurst, &c. 1780.

play-houses, viz. four private and six public theatres. Most, if not all Shakspeare's plays were performed either at the *Globe* on the Bank-side, or at the private theatre in *Black Friars*. This latter was very small, and plays were represented there by candle-light. The Globe was situated on the South side of the Thames. It was an hexagonal building, partly open to the weather, and partly covered with reeds. It was a public theatre of considerable size; and plays were acted there by day-light. It was burnt down in 1613; and rebuilt the following year with great improvements. Exhibitions at the *Globe* were chiefly calculated for the lower people: those at *Black Friars*, for a more select and judicious audience. Wright, author of the *Historia Histrionica* (1699), informs us, that the Globe was a summer, and the other a winter theatre.

In Shakspeare's time, the price of admission to the pit was sixpence:—to the best *rooms* (as they were called) or boxes, a shilling. Admission to meaner theatres was obtained at a much cheaper rate. The *Fortune* playhouse, which belonged to William Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, had a *Two-penny* gallery, as we learn from Middleton's comedy of the *Roaring Girl*, 1611. In the reign of Charles I. the price of admission to the boxes in the more respectable theatres was advanced to two shillings, and half a crown.

It appears from several passages in old plays, that persons were permitted to sit on the stage as spectators of the exhibition. The critics and wits chiefly took their seats there. This indulgence indeed was granted only at the private, not at the public theatres.—The stage was strewed with rushes; the usual covering indeed for floors, at that time, in England.

As to the machinery of the stage, it was very simple before the time of Shakspeare, as we learn from a passage in Sir Philip Sydney's Defence of Poetry (1595). Mr. Malone, from several circumstances collected from old plays and their stage-directions, sinks the mechanism of the ancient English theatre so very low, as to imagine that it seldom went beyond a painted chair, or a trap-door; and that few, if any of them, had any moveable

scenes. They had, he thinks, only curtains to be drawn backward or forward on an iron rod; and a single scene, composed of tapestry, which appears sometimes to have been ornamented with pictures. Some passages in the old dramas incline one to think, that, when tragedies were performed, the stage was hung with black.

Mr. Steevens, however, is of opinion that the machinery of the stage in the time of Shakspeare was not so simple and scanty as Mr. Malone supposes. From some stage directions in the first folio edition of his plays, it should seem that the machinery was considerably improved. In *The Tempest*, Ariel is said to enter "like a harpy, claps his wings on the table, and with a quaint device the banquet vanishes." In a subsequent scene of the same play, "Juno descends"; and in *Cymbeline*, "Jupiter descends likewise in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle." In Macbeth, "the cauldron *sinks*, and the apparitions *rise*." "It may be added, says Mr. Steevens, that the dialogue of Shakspeare hath such perpetual reference to objects supposed visible to the audience, that the want of scenery could not have failed to render many of the descriptions uttered by his speakers absurd and laughable." He also observes, that the pageants and tournaments so often exhibited in the reign of Henry VIII. might afford a natural introduction to scenery on the stage.

Before the exhibition began, three flourishes, or pieces of music, were played; or, in the ancient language, there were three *soundings*. Music was likewise played between the acts: the instruments chiefly used were trumpets, cornets and hautboys. The band, which did not consist of more than five or six persons, sat in an upper balcony, over what is now called the stage-box.

The performers of male characters generally wore periwigs—a part of dress unusual at that period. Masques were sometimes worn by those who performed in female characters. In Shakspeare's time, and for many years afterwards, these latter characters were represented by boys or young men. Sir William Davenant, in imitation of the foreign theatres, first introduced females in the scene.

In Shakspeare's time, it was not *customary* to exhibit more than a single drama in one day. The *Yorkshire Tragedy*, or *All's One*, appears, indeed, to have been one of four pieces that were exhibited the same day; and Fletcher has also a piece called *Four Plays in One.* We find no other instance of the same kind. Farces were not introduced till after the Restoration.

The entertainment in Shakspeare's time was diversified and enlivened (principally for the sake of the common people) by vaulting, tumbling, slight of hand, morrice-dancing, &c.—in short (says old Stephen Gosson, in his *School of Abuse*, 1579), " nothing is forgot (viz. by the Devil) that might serve to set out the matter with pomp, or ravish the beholders with variety of pleasure."

The amusements which preceded the commencement of the play were anciently of various kinds. While some part of the audience entertained themselves with reading or playing at cards, others (says Mr. Malone) were employed in less refined occupations, in drinking ale or smoking tobacco.

It was customary in the time of Shakspeare to carry *table-books* (as they were called) to the theatre, and either from curiosity or enmity to the Author, or some other motive, to write down passages of the play. There is reason to believe, that some of Shakspeare's dramas underwent this fate; and that some of the old quartos were published from these imperfect copies.

The ancient custom of concluding the play with a prayer for the health and prosperity of the King and Queen, if it were acted in the public theatres, probably gave birth to the common addition to the modern play-bills, *Vivant Rex & Regina.* If the play was acted in private houses, the patrons of it were prayed for. Plays in the time of Shakspeare began at one o'clock in the afternoon: and the exhibition was usually finished in two hours. Even in 1667, they commenced at three o'clock.

From Gosson's *School of Abuse*, above quoted, it seems that dramatic entertainments were usually exhibited on Sundays:—afterwards they were performed on that and other days indiscriminately. Withers complains of this

profanation of the Lord's Day, so late as the year 1628, though Prynne is silent about it in his *Histriomastix*, 1633. May, however, in his *History of the Parliament*, &c. 1646, taking a review of the conduct of King Charles and his ministers from 1628 to 1640, observes, that plays were usually represented at *Court* on *Sundays* during that period. It is probable, that they were not *publicly* performed at that time on the Lord's Day.

Play-bills announcing the title and leading features of the exhibition were given out in Shakspeare's time to draw an audience: but the characters of the piece and the names of the actors were not specified. This latter practice did not commence till the beginning of the present century. It is conjectured by the Editor, that the long and whimsical titles that are prefixed to the quarto copies of our Author's plays, were transcribed from the play-bills of the time. It is improbable, that Shakspeare, who was exceedingly modest, and who has more than once apologised for his *untutored lines*, should in his MSS. have entitled any of his dramas most *excellent* and *pleasant* performances. The following is an exact copy of the title-page of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, as it appears in the old 4to edition:

A most
Pleasant and excellent conceited
Comedie
Of
Syr John Falstaffe
And the
Merry Wives of Windsor
Entermixed
With sundrie variable and pleasing humours of Sir
Hugh, the Welch Knight, Justice Shallow,
And his wise Cousin, Mr. Slender.
With the
Swaggering Vaine of antient Pistoll
And Corporal Nym.
By William Shakespeare.
As it hath been divers Times acted
By the Right Honourable my Lord Chamber-
laine's Servants:
Both before her Majestie and elsewhere.
1602.

When the æra of *benefits* for the authors commenced, cannot be exactly ascertained. Mr. Oldys hints at an

ancient custom of allotting the profits of the *first* day to the poet: "a regulation (says Mr. Malone, somewhat archly) which would have been very favourable to some of the ephemeral productions of modern times." In the latter end of Q. Elizabeth's reign, the poet had his benefit on the *second* day. Decker speaks of the poet's *third* day in 1612.

Southerne was the first dramatic Writer who obtained the emoluments arising from two representations; and to Farquhar, in 1700, the benefit of a third was granted. Mr. Addison was the first who discontinued the ancient but humiliating practice of distributing tickets, and soliciting company to attend at the theatre on the poet's night. By this mean practice of soliciting people to attend, Southerne is said to have gained 700*l.* by one play.

The customary price of the copy of a play to the Bookseller in the time of Shakspeare appears to have been twenty nobles, or 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* The usual present from the patron to whom it was dedicated, was forty shillings.

Dramatic poets were, in those times, as at present, admitted *gratis* into the theatre.

Cat-calling was an ancient mode of censure. Decker speaks of "*mewing* at passionate speeches." The common term, as well as practice, of *damning* plays, is as ancient, at least, as the time of Sir William Davenant, 1643. Three pieces of Ben Jonson's, and two of Beaumont and Fletcher's, underwent this fate.

Actors in Shakspeare's time had not an *annual* salary. The performers shared the profits of the stage, according to a mode of proportion previously agreed on. The utmost that the sharers of the *Globe* play-house could have received on any one day was about 35*l.* This theatre is supposed to have held about thirteen or fourteen hundred persons. (Each of the modern theatres in Drury-Lane and Covent Garden, Mr. Malone observes in a note, will contain two thousand three hundred.) In 1685, Shadwell received by his benefit on the third night, 130*l.* which was the greatest receipt that had been ever taken before that time at Drury-Lane.

It appears from the MSS. of Lord Stanhope, Treasurer

of the Chambers to King James I. that the customary sum paid to John Heminge and his company, for the performance of a play at court, was 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* to which his Majesty would occasionally add, by way of *bounty*, the sum of 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*

"Thus scanty and meagre (says our ingenious Editor) were the apparatus and accommodation of our ancients theatres, on which those dramas were first exhibited that have since engaged the attention of so many learned men, and delighted so many thousand spectators!"

These observations on the ancient state of the English theatre are followed with some account of the original performers in the dramas of Shakspeare:—this account indeed is very slender, but it is the utmost that could be procured; and, though slender, is another proof of the great industry of Mr. Malone. To this is subjoined a transcript of a curious MS. lately discovered in the library of Dulwich College, entitled, *The Platt of the secound Parte of the Seaven deadlie Sinns.* This *platt* (i.e. *plat-form* or outline of the performance, enumerating the different characters, with the names of the performers) serves in some measure to mark the various degrees of consequence of several of these old actors. In this *platt*, Shakspeare, who is simply called *Will*, is supposed to be the person who acted the part of Itys. Thus also, Edward Alleyne, who afterwards founded Dulwich College, is called *Ned*; and Henry Condell, whom Shakspeare mentions in his will as one of his *fellows*, and who joined with Heminge in the folio edition of his plays, is called *Harry*. Burbage (the *alter Roscius* of Camden) appears in two characters in this *platt*. It is difficult to form a just idea of the nature and design of the piece itself, from this rude sketch of it. It seems to have been an attempt to unite the seriousness and piety of the ancient moralities with the gayer and more insinuating graces of the more regular and improved drama. "The necessity (says Mr. Steevens) of half indulging and half repressing a gross and vicious taste, might have given rise to such pieces of dramatic patchwork as this. Even the most rigid Puritans might have been content to behold exhibitions in which Pagan histories were rendered sub-

servient to Christian purposes. The dulness of the intervening homilist would have half absolved the *deadly sin* of the poet. A *sainted* audience would have been tempted to think the representation of *Othello* laudable, provided the piece were at once heightened and moralised by choruses spoken in the characters of Ireton and Cromwell!" We by no means subscribe to this opinion. The old Puritans objected to every species of dramatic entertainment; and looked on every attempt to unite the church and the stage as an impious profanation of the former. Their rigidness yielded not to the charms of poetry; and their horror was the more increased when Christianity was blended with the fictions of Paganism, and Religion in her *sober suit* was forced into company with the gayer characters of a mixed drama.

The *Prolegomena* is succeeded by "Supplemental Observations" on the several plays of Shakspeare, which have occurred since the publication of the last edition. Some of them are of very little consequence, and only serve to enlarge the catalogue of *parallel* passages, already sufficiently numerous in the preceding volumes. Mr. Tyrwhytt's Remarks on Dr. Warburton's *Dissertation on Chivalry and Romance* are learned and ingenious, and sufficiently confute that great man's hypothesis. But it is too long to be transcribed: and we will not do it the injustice to abridge it.

The original letter from Warburton to Concanen, which, from a note on Dr. Akenside's Ode to Mr. Edwards, had long excited the curiosity of the public, is here printed at full length. It was written in the year 1726, and is dated from *Newarke;* at which place, if we have been rightly informed, Dr. Warburton was at that time a practising attorney. Matthew Concanen, to whom the letter was sent, was then a member of a club, in which Theobald, and others of the same class, were engaged in a literary war with Pope and his fellow-wits of an opposite society. Pope's genius had excited their envy; and the severity of ridicule had mortified their pride. At one of their meetings, *the Attorney of Newark* had the honour of being introduced by this Concanen. Having been little in the world, he

looked on himself as highly distinguished by this introduction; and, in the letter now published, acknowledges the obligation with much thankfulness. The most curious part of the letter is that which relates to Mr. Pope; who is directly charged with plagiarism "for want of genius": —the very Mr. Pope, whose *genius* he afterwards exalted by all the extravagance of praise; and on whose Dunciad, where his *old friends*, Concanen and Theobald, were hung up to public scorn, he wrote notes to render its satire intelligible, and pointed out beauties to make its merit conspicuous!

The letter contains remarks on Addison's Cato, and on that sublime passage in "our British Homer" (as he calls Shakspeare)

> "Between the acting of a dreadful thing
> And the first motion, &c."

It appears from the letter, that he had objections to Shakspeare's acquaintance with the ancients—that in his view they were of great weight—that it was necessary that Mr. Theobald should be apprised of them, in order to obviate any difficulty that might occur on that head—and that he would communicate them some other opportunity.

Dr. Warburton, indeed, in the Preface to his edition of Shakspeare, acknowledges, that he had formerly the "ill fortune to have some accidental connections with Theobald":—but the merit of this acknowledgment is in some degree rendered questionable by a passage which succeeds it. "He was recommended to me as a poor man." Hence one might be apt to think, that all Dr. Warburton's attention to this *poor man* was the mere effect of disinterested charity. But whatever his benevolence might have been, at the time when this *accidental connection* began, we apprehend an attorney of small practice in a country town (as Warburton at that time was) was a very unlikely person for a poor author to be *recommended* to for patronage and support. In short, Dr. Warburton, when he had tasted some of the sweets of high life, and when the notice taken of him by the greater wits had expanded his ambition, began to grow ashamed of his former connections,

and used every art to palliate and gloss over what it was impossible for him to deny, or disprove. Hence, he calls that *accidental* which he himself appears to have sought and cultivated : and what he puts down to the score of charity, had been before an object of his ambition !

This curious letter was discovered by chance in the year 1750, by Dr. Gawin Knight, First Librarian to the British Museum, in fitting up a house which he had taken in Crane-Court, Fleet-street. It was many years in the possession of Dr. Akenside. The note on the Doctor's *Ode to Mr. Edwards* concludes with this expression, " Of the truth of these assertions (viz. Dr. Warburton's contemptuous treatment of Mr. Pope in his intercourse with Theobald, &c.) his lordship can have no doubt, if he recollects his own correspondence with Concanen ; a part of which is still in being, and will probably be remembered as long as any of this prelate's writings."

This valuable Supplement contains a correct edition of Shakspeare's poems, viz. Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece, One hundred and fifty-four Sonnets, The passionate Pilgrim, and The Lover's Complaint. These poems were published separately, with the Author's name, in his lifetime ; and were afterwards collected and published in one volume. Shakspeare calls his " Venus and Adonis," in the Dedication of this poem to his great patron, the Earl of Southampton, " the first heir of his invention." It was entered on the books of the Stationers Company in April 1593. " The Rape of Lucrece " was first printed in 4to, in 1594 : the Sonnets, in 1609 ; though these last were known in the private circle of his friends so early as the year 1598, having been mentioned in a publication of that year by Meres, in his *Wit's Treasury*, under the quaint character of " Sugred Sonnets of the mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakspeare, in whom lives the sweet witty soul of Ovid." " The passionate Pilgrim " was first published in 1599, and " The Lover's Complaint " in 1609. Mr. Malone observes, that " these poems seem to have gained Shakspeare more reputation than his plays :—at least, they are oftener mentioned or alluded to."

The authenticity of these poems is too well established

by internal evidence, and by the most circumstantial external proofs, to admit of a dispute. Shakspeare's genius indeed was too ardent and vigorous for poems that dwelt chiefly in relation or narrative. Hence, though stored with beauties, they become on the whole languid and tiresome. His end seemed to be, to allot a certain number of verses to each story that he undertook to relate; and when this purpose was accomplished, he did not exert his genius to provide for any thing besides. *Permittit numinibus quid conveniat.* But it was the faulty taste of the times; for the old poem of *Romeus and Juliet* (republished in this Supplement) is equally prolix and tedious, and often as uninteresting as the "Rape of Lucrece."

The merit of that species of poetry adopted by Shakspeare in his "Sonnets," is differently estimated by Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone; the former calling it "the contrivance of some literary Procrastes"; and the latter, though not its professed champion, yet is so far interested in its credit, as to think it worth his while, to bestow some little pains in rescuing it from the contempt thrown on it by the former. The Reader, if he will see how the dispute begins, and how it is carried on, must consult the Work itself. It is left *undecided*: for though Mr. Malone hath the last word (being the Editor), we have reason to think that Mr. Steevens is disposed to adhere to his own opinion. This is generally the case, after answers, replies, and rejoinders, where the controversy turns on speculation, taste, or sentiment, and cannot be decided by appeals to facts, and is above submitting to any authority.

Before we close this subject, we cannot avoid remarking the striking similarity between one of Shakspeare's sonnets and that well-known and beautiful passage in the *Paradise Lost*, where Adam is represented as breathing out the enthusiasm of his passion for Eve in the following most elegant lines:

> "Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,
> With charm of earliest birds, &c. &c.
>
> . . . . .
>
> But neither breath of Morn when she ascends
> With charm of earliest birds, nor rising Sun

On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flowers,
Glist'ring with dew, nor fragrance after showers,
Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night
With this her solemn bird; nor walk by noon,
Nor glitt'ring star-light without thee is sweet."

These lines are a great improvement on the following from Shakspeare (from whom indeed the original thought seems to have been borrowed):

"Yet not the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
Nor praise the deep vermillion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight
Drawn after you, the pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still and you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play."

Mr. Steevens hath produced a passage [1] from the beginning of the 3d book of the *Paradise Lost*, as in some degree similar to these lines; but we do not think the parallel happily chosen; and we are surprised that the passage we have produced did not strike him, as having a much nearer affinity both in sentiment and expression.

[1] Mr. Steevens' quotation is the following:

. . . but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom or summer's rose.

SECTION V

POLITICAL.

TAXATION NO TYRANNY.

AN ANSWER TO TAXATION NO TYRANNY.

V

March 1775 Vol. 52 p. 253[1]

Human powers and human knowledge are circumscribed within such narrow limits, that no individual can excell in all undertakings.—The writer to whom we ascribe the work before us, has on other occasions by the right application of his talents merited a large share of public approbation; and if his present effort has less claim to applause, it is not because his abilities have been impaired, but because they have been misapplied. We have before had occasion to regret that any motive should have influenced him to engage in political controversy, and we believe his present performance will yield no considerable addition to his credit, either as a writer, or as an honest independent friend to his country; for though he delivers assertions with an excess of confidence which disdains the support of any fact or authority, yet he appears from many particulars to have been but imperfectly acquainted with his subject, and has indeed done little more than repeated with some improvement of style and manner, doctrines and opinions that have been advanced by numerous writers on the same side of the dispute; he has however advanced two fundamental positions that are not only erroneous but dangerous; and as they may acquire some credit from his great reputation, we shall now descend to a more particular examination of their nature and tendency than appeared expedient to us on former occasions.

Our Author's first position is, "*that the supreme power of every community has the right of requiring from all its subjects such contributions, as are necessary to the public safety or public prosperity,*" and this he represents as one

[1] Art. 15. *Taxation no Tyranny;* an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. 8vo. 1*s.* 6*d.* Cadell. 1775.

of those " gratuitous truths " which are to be " *felt* " and not " *seen.*" The feelings of humanity will however probably afford nothing but contradictory evidence on the present subject.—Mankind do not acquire the knowledge of taxation until they have made some advancement in political society, and in that state the sentiments of individuals will often differ respecting the present question; for the laborious part of a community will then have a strong sense of the rights of property hardly acquired, and but a very imperfect conviction of the right of government to deprive them of any part of it without their consent; whilst on the contrary the *pensioner* who shares in the monies arising from public taxes, will have an *acute feeling* of the right of government to levy contributions in which he is allowed to partake. Rejecting therefore all reference to the feelings of individuals respecting this factitious position, let us bring it to a more decisive trial.

Our Author's true meaning, as more plainly expressed in other places is, *that* those who hold the powers of government in a state, have a right to exact pecuniary contributions from the people *at pleasure.*

We are far from thinking that such supplies as may be expedient for the public welfare should not be granted; but we contend that it belongs to the people to judge of the expediency of such grants, and that whenever supplies are given, they should be considered as *free gifts*, proceeding from the choice or benevolence of the people, and not as *exactions* made by the hand of power, and submitted to from necessary or slavish duty: there is an important distinction between the right of legislation and the right of granting the people's property for national purposes, and though they have been commonly joined in the same hands, this has not been done *always*, or from necessity, but from convenience. Of this we could give abundant evidence had we room to adduce facts from the histories of other states; it is however of more importance to inquire how far this doctrine is conformable to the English constitution.

Had the right of taxation belonged to Parliament as a necessary part of its legislative authority, this right might

have been exercised with equal justice by either house, and it would doubtless have been equally exercised over all those who were subject to its legislative authority: the Commons, however, have immemorially enjoyed the exclusive privilege of originating and modifying all *Money Bills* allowing the Peers only a bare *negative*; without which they must have been in a worse condition than other *freeholders* as not being like them, represented among the Commons. Nor is this the only peculiarity; for it was constantly required that a bill of supply when assented to by the Peers should be returned to the Commons who have enjoyed the privilege of presenting all money bills by their speaker to the king, and of receiving, in their *representative capacity* the *royal thanks*, which have been always given to the people collectively (whose act the grant is supposed to be) for their *benevolence*.—But if taxation had been a simple act of legislation, or if it had been true as our author asserts, that "*a tax is a payment exacted by authority*," there could have been no pretence for the Commons to claim these exclusive privileges, respecting money bills; nor is it possible to believe the Peers would have submitted to a claim so injurious and unreasonable: neither would the clergy, whilst subject to the legislative authority of parliament, have been exempted from the taxes imposed by parliament, and allowed the exclusive privilege of taxing themselves, which they enjoyed, until a share in the popular representation was granted them in the reign of Charles II. We find by the roll of the 4th of Richard II. No. 13, 14, that when the House of Commons proposed to grant an aid, provided the clergy would pay one third of it, as possessing one third of the realm, the clergy answered they were not to grant aids by parliament; and desired the Commons to do their duty, and leave the clergy to perform theirs. And here we have a strong proof that the powers of legislation and taxation are essentially distinct by the English constitution, because we find that with respect to the clergy they could not be exercised by the same persons; and if we consider the peculiar forms attending bills of supply, we shall have reason to believe that those powers were in effect considered as not less

distinct when exercised over the *laity;* for though the pecuniary grants of the Commons were clothed in the forms of law to authorize their collection, yet the same was also done to the grants of the clergy which always received the legislative assent of parliament, though the clergy were confessedly exempted from parliamentary taxation.

We are moreover convinced that anciently taxation was no part of the ordinary business of parliament; the demesne lands of the crown being sufficient for the common expences of government;—and when the King by wars or prodigality needed the assistance of his people, it was always asked as a *free gift*, sometimes from the Commons, and sometimes from the clergy in convocation. Of this we have many proofs in the acts and records preserved by Rymer, Cotton, &c.—Thus we find the Commons in the reign of Richard II. representing *that if the King's expences were well looked to he should need but little to charge the Commons;* and afterwards we find them requesting the King *to live within his revenues, and that all GIFTS might be employed upon the wars.*—And though by succeeding improvident alienations of the royal demesnes, more constant and liberal supplies from the people are now become necessary, yet this prodigality in the crown could not alter the nature of those supplies, or destroy the rights of property, or change the principles of our constitution, so far as to convert those grants which were originally of benevolence or free-will, into *arbitrary exactions* and *slavish duties.*

That taxes are really to be considered as *free gifts*, has been maintained by Bracton, Lord Coke, and many other of the most respectable law writers; and they have been so expressed even by parliament itself in several acts and records; and indeed the terms of "*give and grant*" constantly used in money bills with the prescribed form of the royal thanks given when such bills are presented, sufficiently explain their true nature.

If therefore taxes are *free gifts* of the people, by whom they are paid, it necessarily follows that they must be *freely given* by that people, or their representatives, who alone can have a right to *give.*

We hope these observations will not be thought inexpedient, when it is considered that the position to which they relate, essentially affects the rights of property in Great Britain, as well as the question of American taxation, which even our Author would have us examine "with caution proportioned to the event of a decision which must convict one part of robbery, or the other of rebellion."

Our Author's other position is, that "there must in every society be some power or other from which there is no appeal, which admits no restrictions, which pervades the whole mass of the community, regulates and adjusts all subordination, enacts laws or repeals them, erects or annuls judicatures, extends or contracts privileges, exempts itself from question or control, and bounded only by physical necessity."

Similar positions have been made the foundation of almost every system of arguments against the claims of the colonies, and yet they can be true only of societies which are governed by *divine authority;* for wherever a state is governed by a *power* delegated from the people, that power must have been delegated on certain conditions, and for certain ends, from which those entrusted with it can have no right to depart.—Before a parliament could have been legally constituted, certain compacts must have been made, certain rights established, and certain constitutions formed, to support and regulate even the existence of *parliament itself;* and these must in reason and justice be considered as so many impassable boundaries to the authority of parliament, which, however absolute within such limits, could not extend to the subversion of rights or constitutions established by the whole society collectively, without invalidating the very commission by which the authority of parliament was delegated. Lawyers, indeed, from a constant habit of submitting their reason to the authority of parliament, have commonly adopted extravagant ideas of its authority. Almost all of them however, and particularly Lord Coke, speak of certain acts and certain rights as being more especially *sacred* and *fundamental.*—And the act of settlement declares, according to the ancient doctrine of the common

law, that certain essential privileges are "*the BIRTH-RIGHT of the people of England*," which necessarily implies, that they cannot justly be taken away by any authority. But moreover, parliament itself has expressly set bounds to its own power, and thereby warranted us to conclude that its power is not unlimited: the statute 25th of Edward III. declares that the great charter shall be *always* allowed as the common law, and directs sentence of excommunication to be denounced at stated times against all those who act or counsel any thing against it,—and the statute 42d of Edward III. C. 1. enacts, "That the great charter and the charter of the forrest shall be holden and kept in all points; and if any *statute shall be made to the contrary, that shall be holden for none*"; all which does most strongly imply that there are certain fundamental rights, and particularly those contained in the charters before mentioned, which no parliament has a right to invade. We have besides the memorable case of two of the judges of England (Sir Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley,) who were HANGED for allowing the force of *law* to an act of parliament made in the 11th year of Henry VII. by which the right of trial by jury was abridged, contrary to what Lord Coke styles "*a fundamental law*": and his Lordship (2d Inst.) observes, "*that the fearful end of these two oppressors should deter others from committing the like*" (that is from enforcing an unconstitutional act of parliament) "*and should ADMONISH PARLIAMENTS that instead of this ordinary and precious trial* per Legem Terræ, *they bring not in absolute and partial trials by discretion.*" [1]

These facts and authorities will doubtless be insufficient to invalidate our Author's position, and to prove that the

[1] These facts operate to prove that the authority of a parliament legally constituted has some fundamental bounds which it ought not to transgress, —but parliamentary authority even within those bounds may be *vitiated* if extended over persons who having a right to be represented, have no representative therein.—This appears from the act made for admitting representatives for the County Palatine of Chester; which, after reciting that the inhabitants thereof had been bound by acts of Parliament without having "either knight or burgess" therein, declares these extensions of parliamentary authority to have been a *grievance*, and *derogatory* to their "most ancient jurisdictions, liberties, and privileges." "For remedy whereof, &c." a representation was granted.

power of parliament is not (what no human power ought to be) unlimited: there are indeed many acts which the feelings of every honest man would determine to be beyond the lawful authority of parliament, *e.g.* Should an act be ever passed to annihilate the democratic branch of our legislature, such act would not only deserve resistance, but every one promoting it would deserve the punishment of a traitor, guilty of what Lord *Somers* calls "the first and highest of treasons,—that which is committed against the constitution." Nor would it be much less criminal to deprive the *freeholders* of *England* of the right of suffrage for representatives in parliament.—But how far it is justifiable to impose laws and taxes upon the *freeholders* of *America*, without allowing them a representation, we presume not to decide, though it is a question which may be worthy of consideration.

We have bestowed these observations upon our Author's position, not only because great part of his conclusions are deduced from it, but because we think it *pregnant* with danger to the liberties of the people of Great Britain. We do not indeed suspect that any undue connexion has been yet formed between the legislative and executive powers of government, or that the modern system of governing by parliament results from the acquisition of any unconstitutional influence therein.—It is however possible, that in some future reign, the means of corruption belonging to the crown may be so employed as that the representatives of the people instead of protecting may betray the rights of their constituents.—And the President *Montesquieu* has even predicted, that the constitution of England will finally perish by this species of perfidy: it is our duty therefore, as friends to the liberties of mankind, and especially of our own countrymen, to discourage this prevailing fashionable doctrine of parliamentary omnipotence; for the *passive obedience and nonresistance* which this doctrine comprehends, will not be rendered less dangerous, by transferring that unlimited power to a future corrupt *parliament* which some wickedly ascribe to the *King*, during the reigns of the Stuarts.—We mean not to *define*, much less to *abridge* the just limits of parliamentary authority;

but we would oppose those who maintain that it has NO *bounds*, and consequently, that the people have NO *rights* but what depend on the arbitrary will of their delegates; a doctrine tending to prepare us for slavery even before we have a corrupt parliament ready to betray us into it.

To apply the preceding observations to particular parts of our Author's work, would require more room than we can bestow on any single performance, and we must therefore content ourselves with noticing a few of the many other exceptionable passages therein; particularly

1st, "He that denies the English Parliament the right of taxation, denies it likewise the right of making any other laws civil or criminal, yet this power over the Colonies was never yet disputed by themselves. They have always admitted statutes for the punishment of offences, and for the redress or prevention of inconveniences; and the reception of any law draws after it by a chain which cannot be broken, the unwelcome necessity of submitting to taxation."

Having before proved that a right to taxation is different from a right of legislation, it must follow that a denial of the former does not necessarily involve a denial of the latter.—Not that we think the people of America, even if exempted from parliamentary taxation, could be said to enjoy the privileges of Britons while subject to a legislative power in which they have no participation.—The Colonies have indeed consented to obey such acts of parliament as are *bona fide* made to regulate their commerce; but it is ungenerous to employ this consent in supporting oppressive claims, and every attempt to do it must incline them to retract a concession which they find so much abused.

With regard to our Author's assertion that the legislative authority of parliament "*was never yet disputed*" by the Colonies, it is so repugnant to truth, that to acquit him of wilful falsehood, we must convict him of great ignorance respecting the political history of the Colonies.—In our Review for November last we alleged instances in which the right of parliament to make laws binding in America had been denied by King James I. and his ministers, and by the people of the Colonies, who for several years openly

disobeyed the acts of trade and navigation; nor were they at all observed in the Colony of Massachusetts until after the General Assembly there had passed an act professedly to give them that validity of which as acts of parliament they were held to be destitute: and we shall recite part of the letter which the assembly on that occasion, *viz.* in 1679, wrote to their agent in England, as sufficient to show what degree of credit is due to our Author's assertion. Writing of the acts of trade, &c. the assembly declare, "we apprehend them to be an invasion of the rights, liberties, and properties, of the subjects of his Majesty in this Colony, they, *not being represented in parliament;* and according to the usual sayings of the learned in the law, the laws of England are bounded within the four seas, and do not reach America.

2*dly*, Concerning the plea of the congress, that by migrating to America they forfeited none of the rights of English subjects, our Author writes, "That they who form a settlement by a lawful Charter, having committed no crime, forfeit no privileges, will be readily confessed; but what they do not forfeit by any judicial sentence, they may lose by natural effects. As man can be but in one place at once, he cannot have the advantages of multiplied residence. He that will enjoy the brightness of sunshine, must quit the coolness of the shade. He who goes voluntarily to America, cannot complain of losing what he leaves in Europe. He perhaps has a right to vote for a knight or burgess: by crossing the Atlantick he has not nullified his right; for he has made its exertion no longer possible. By his own choice he has left a country where he had a vote and little property, for another, where he has great property, but no vote. But as this preference was deliberate and unconstrained, he is still *concerned in the government of himself;* he has reduced himself from a voter to one of the innumerable multitudes that have no vote. He has truly *ceded his right*, but he still is governed by his own consent; because he has consented to throw his atom of interest into the general mass of the community. Of the consequences of his own act he has no cause to complain; he has chosen, or intended to chuse, the greater good;

he is represented, as himself desired, in the general representation."

It is here in effect admitted, that a Colonist deprived of a representation is deprived of one of the rights belonging to Englishmen, or at least to English freeholders; but it is also pretended, that by emigration he has voluntarily relinquished that right, contrary to the expectation of the emigrants themselves, and to the strongest assurances given in their several charters.—Our Author should have remembered that though a Colonist by going to America, might cease to be a freeholder of a particular county in England, yet he acquired by this transition another freehold in a particular district of America, and if after removing to that continent his person and his new freehold were still to continue subject to the laws and taxes of parliament, every circumstance which rendered it expedient or desirable for him to be represented while he was an English freeholder, must make it expedient and desirable that he should enjoy a similar representation as a freeholder of America; and to deprive him of it, is to strip him of the most important privilege that belongs to the subjects of a free government. So far, however, were the Colonists from expecting to suffer any abridgement of the rights of Englishmen, that as Governor Hutchinson has mentioned in his history of the Massachusetts Bay, "the first planters of the Massachusetts colony removed to America, expecting there to enjoy civil and religious liberty in a GREATER DEGREE than their fellow-subjects at that time enjoyed it in England."

3*dly*, "The reason (says our Author) why we place any confidence in our representatives is, that they must share in the good or evil which their counsels shall produce. Their share is indeed commonly consequential and remote; but it is not often possible that any immediate advantage can be extended to such numbers as may prevail against it. We are therefore as secure against intentional depravations of government as human wisdom can make us, and upon this security the Americans may venture to repose."

Of the objection to which this is intended for a reply, we gave an account in our Review for December last,

p. 477, and certainly it has not been invalidated by any thing delivered in this performance; it would, therefore, have been more judicious in our Author had he entirely overlooked the objection.

4thly, "It is urged (says our Author,) that when Wales, Durham, and Chester, were divested of their particular privileges or ancient government, and reduced to the state of English counties, they had representatives assigned to them.

"To those from whom something had been taken, something in return might properly be given. To the Americans their Charters are left as they were, except that of which their sedition has deprived them. If they were to be represented in Parliament, something would be granted, though nothing is withdrawn."

Having no room to enter upon the subject of American Charters, or of the sedition for which one of them is said to have been taken away (though never legally forfeited), we shall only observe, that nothing was given to the people of Wales, Durham, and Chester, when they were brought to the state of English counties, but the privileges of English subjects, which were by parliament itself understood necessarily to include that of being represented.—To the same privileges of English subjects the Colonists were entitled by *birth right*, and therefore in asking a representation, they do not ask the grant of a new favour.

5thly, "It might be hoped (proceeds our Author) that no Englishman could be found, whom the menaces of our own Colonists, just rescued from the French, would not move to indignation, like that of the Scythians, who, returning from war, found themselves excluded from their own houses by their slaves."

We have heard of a chimney-sweeper who fancied himself associated in the sovereignty of America, and often asked "*are not the Americans* OUR *subjects* ?" But Doctor —— suffers his fancy to *ramble* farther than that of the chimney-sweeper; for before he can have the same cause of indignation as the Scythians, he must fancy the Colonists are not only his *subjects* but his *slaves*, and that their claim

to the benefit of their own houses, is a *forcible entry* and *ouster* committed in his own.

6*thly*, Though we were before told by our Author, that the Colonists had never denied the legislative authority of parliament, we afterwards find him asserting that they "now question the validity of every act of legislation. They consider themselves as emancipated from obedience, and as being *no longer the subjects of the British crown.*" We are willing to overlook the contradiction between this and our Author's *former* assertion; but to preserve his veracity from an impeachment even by the former imputation of ignorance seems hardly practicable; for *negative ignorance* will not justify *positive falsehood;* on the contrary when a writer steps forth and deliberately charges three millions of people with having renounced their allegiance to the British crown, it is not sufficient that he does not know that his charge is not true; for it is necessary that he should know it to be true.—But it is on the contrary notorious, that however the authority of parliament may have been disputed, the sovereignty of the crown or of the person of the king has not been denied or even questioned in a single instance, verbally or in writing, by the *wildest son of liberty* in any British American Colony.

7*thly*, Our Author looking forward to the conquest of the Colonies, says, "When they are reduced to obedience, may that obedience be secured by *stricter laws* and stronger obligations!" and he afterwards adds the following observation, which seems intended to promote confiscations, and other attendant punishments, though not as we charitably hope with an expectation of receiving any valuable American forfeiture as the reward of his present performance. "Nothing (adds he) can be more noxious to society than that erroneous clemency which, when a rebellion is suppressed, exacts no forfeiture, and establishes no security, but leaves the rebels in their former state."

Towards the close of this answer, our Author consents to "interrupt for a while this dream of conquest, settlement, and supremacy," and to reflect, that "*we may possibly* be checked in our career of reduction: may be reduced to peace on equal terms, or driven from the

western continent, and forbidden to violate a second time the happy borders of the land of liberty."—Should this ever happen, we shall have abundant cause to reprobate those measures and principles for which our Author is a zealous, if not a successful advocate.

May 1775 Vol. 52 p. 446[1]

This production discovers its Author to have been well acquainted with the subjects of our American dispute, and with the principles of the British constitution; but his arguments are too solid and incompressible for much abridgment, and therefore we can only cite a few of them for the satisfaction of our readers.

In page 21 *& seq.* he maintains that the right of parliamentary representation is constitutionally an incident of property, freehold and personal: that anciently *Peers* were not created by the Crown, but became such in right of their respective baronies; a man who had a certain portion of property becoming of course a peer: that a number of smaller properties belonging to other men, combined and centered in one man by election, gave him a right of sitting in parliament as representative of the property of several; whilst the baron sat as representing his own property alone: that "the barons in old time sitting by their property, taxed themselves, that is, taxed their own property. But now, sitting by the act of the crown merely, without reference to property, the commons who continue to sit by property, have claimed the whole of taxation, and the lords have ceded it to them. This (continues he) shews to a demonstration, that the body which is constituted by the property of any country, is the only body constitutionally qualified to tax that country."

"Had the Norman conqueror returned to Normandy, and made that the seat of empire, the Norman states would have been the imperial legislature. Would he have been intitled, I ask, to tax his English subjects in his states of Normandy? You will not affirm it. Yet might he not say, 'My Norman states made laws for all my subjects,

[1] Art. 12. *An Answer to a Pamphlet*, intitled, "*Taxation no Tyranny.*" Addressed to the Author, and to Persons in Power. 8vo. 1*s.* 6*d.* Almon.

when I had no subjects beyond Normandy; and why may they not continue to do so still, though my condition is altered in that respect: My Norman law has made no distinction concerning my subjects beyond sea; (for the prince might forget, that till he had subjects beyond sea, no mention of them could be expected.) I am too moderate to make these subjects beyond sea dependant on myself. They shall be dependant on my Norman states; and there will be this comfort in it besides, that I can do what I please with my Norman states, whereas the popular assemblies beyond sea might be less manageable.' This speech, no doubt, would be highly relished; the Norman states would be flattered; a great majority would vote for the doctrine; the minority would be called an English faction and decried; and all would be harmony and satisfaction in Normandy. But how would it have gone in England? I will answer this question for you. He must have conquered it again, and again, and again. If he were once worsted, he would have been undone, and every pause of bloodshed would have been a renewal of war.

"England, however, as I hope it always will, continued to be the seat of empire to him and to his descendants. Did any of them attempt to tax their dominions beyond sea in the legislature of England? Never. The Scotch have asserted, that they conquered England: the English have asserted that they conquered Scotland. Did either nation, though *contiguous*, ever think of taxing the other in its domestic legislature? No such thing was ever thought of. Henry the Fifth conquered France. Did he or his son ever attempt to tax France in the English parliament? Of if they had resided in France, would the states of France have been the constitutional legislature for taxing the English subject? You will not say it. Was Wales, though conquered and contiguous, ever taxed by the English parliament till it sent representatives thither? Never. When the crowns of England and Scotland were united in the person of James the First, who made England the seat of empire, did the parliament of England ever think of taxing Scotland? Or in queen Anne's reign,

when the Scotch were averse to a union, were they ever told, that the English parliament could do the business, if they were refractory; for that Scotland was represented in the parliament of England, though all the property on the other side of the Tweed did not constitute one vote towards constituting one member of that assembly? No man ever dreamed of such a thing. Did Henry the Second, or any of his successors, ever attempt to tax Ireland in the English parliament, though conquered, and not very distant? No, you confess. But the judges, you say, have mentioned a distinction to account for this exemption, viz. that Ireland had a parliament of her own. But why was a parliament given to her? Because no man thought at that time, that the English parliament was a constitutional or adequate legislature in ordinary, for dominions beyond sea. Nor can I believe, that the judges grounded their decision merely on the trisyllable, 'parliament'; or that they had any other idea, than that Ireland having a legislature, by whatever name, competent to taxation, it was not fitting that she should be taxed by the English parliament, in the constituting of which the property of Ireland had no share. Now this holds equally as to the provincial assemblies, and to the legislatures or states of every kingdom or province which I have before mentioned; and therefore it is clear, that this universal practice was founded on a universal principle, that the parliament of England ought not to tax any part of the dominion, the property of which had not its due share in constituting that assembly."

In page 53 our Author proceeds, "Though every part of your publication breathes nothing but the spirit of tyranny, yet there is one passage so audacious, that it deserves to be distinguished. In your 24th page you have these words; 'An *English Individual* may by the supreme authority be deprived of liberty, and a *Colony* divested of its *powers*, for reasons of which that authority is the *sole* judge.' If one Individual, or one Colony, can be thus deprived, so may all the Colonies together; so may every man in the community. For I defy any man to shew where any limitation exists, if any such power be

admitted. By this doctrine, the Parliament, for reasons of which it is the *sole* judge: that is without assigning any reason at all, may make every man in the British Empire a slave in one day. That is to say, a body of men, taken from amongst ourselves, in number not above a thousand, collected in one spot of the Empire, under the most sacred trust for the service of the whole, are intitled to do that which no power on earth has a right to do, viz. to make slaves at one blow, and without saying wherefore, of fourteen millions of fellow subjects, and of their posterity, to latest time, and throughout every quarter of the world. Is such language to be endured? Or can he be a friend to human nature who uses it?

"With equal humanity, in your 60th page, you say, 'If the Bostonians are condemned *unheard*, it is because there is no *need* of a *trial*. All trial is the investigation of something *doubtful*.' Your ideas of legislation we had before, and your *judicial* ideas are as intolerable. To say that a crime's being notorious, or asserted to be notorious, will justify condemnation unheard, is too insolent an imposition. Where is the Caligula who would not say that the guilt of the man, or of the province that he wanted to destroy, was notorious? If the assertion of the tyrant will convert cruelty into justice, no tyrant will ever be cruel. But the law of England is so different from your sentiment, that it presumes every man to be innocent, till his guilt is tried and established. That is, instead of condemning unheard, so long as any man is unheard, it acquits him."

"The tumour of your style, (concludes our Author) the insolence of your manners, your rawness in the great principles of the subject which you treat, and your universal inaccuracy, or unfairness in arguing, are inferior considerations, and faults that may be forgiven. But let it be remembered, at all events, that with respect to this point, you confess, that if the Americans are right, it is robbery in us, not rebellion in them. Now I ask any man, whether on this state it is so clear that America is wrong, and that it is not robbery in us, as that we should lightly run the risque of becoming murderers also; and murderers

of our fellow-subjects into the bargain? Every lover of truth and liberty, every honest and conscientious man will feel this question. The soldier will feel it; the sailor will feel it; the free subject will feel it: the King and his ministers will feel it."

SECTION VI

MISCELLANEOUS.

REMARKS ON THE LIVES, WORKS AND BIOGRAPHIES. PAMPHLETS RELATING TO THE TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES. VARIOUS PAMPHLETS ON JOHNSON'S POLITICAL WRITINGS. MISCELLANEOUS.

VI

Feb. 1783 Vol. 68 p. 185[1]

This seems to be the production of some ingenious but angry Scotchman, who has taken great pains to prove, what all the world knows, that there are many exceptionable passages in the writings of Dr. Johnson. There are, however, few spots in this literary luminary now pointed out that have not been discovered before. So that the present map must be considered rather as a monument of the delineator's malignity, than of his wit.—His *personalities* seem to indicate personal provocation ; though perhaps it may be all pure *nationality.*

Feb. 1783 Vol. 68 p. 186[2]

The partial and uncandid mode of criticism adopted by Dr. Johnson in his Remarks on Gray, seems to have given general, and indeed just, offence to the numerous admirers of that exquisite poet. It is not long since there appeared an ingenious vindication of the *progress of poetry* and *the Bard*, intitled, " A cursory Examination of Dr. Johnson's Strictures on the lyric Performances of Gray." [3] The present Writer has taken a larger field : his critical *Ægis* extends its protection to every part of his admired Hero. And it is but justice to say that he has ably defended him.

Feb. 1783 Vol. 68 p. 186[4]

Our Yorkshire Freeholder's Remarks are chiefly confined to the Doctor's political misrepresentations. He is a strenuous assertor of *the Whig principle*, which he vindicates against the Tory Doctor, with that honest kind of spirit which animates a combatant who is firmly persuaded that he has truth on his side.

[1] Art. 38. *Deformities of Dr. Samuel Johnson.* Selected from his Works. Edinburgh printed. 8vo. 1*s.* Sold by Stockdale, London.

[2] Art. 39. *Remarks on Dr. Johnson's Life, and critical Observations on the Works of Mr. Gray.* 8vo. 1*s.* 6*d* Fielding. 1782.

[3] Rev. March 1782, Art. 27. of the Catalogue.

[4] Art. 40. *Remarks on Doctor Johnson's Lives of the most eminent English Poets.* By a Yorkshire Freeholder. 4to 1*s.* 6*d.* Baldwin 1782.

Feb. 1785 Vol. 72 p. 150[1]

Dr. Johnson has frequently been considered as the father of the present race of English poets; and it is a mark of becoming piety in his sons to express, as several of them have done, their grief for the loss of a parent so justly revered. If, in their poetic exertions, they follow their Sire *non passibus æquis*, where is the wonder? Could it be expected that the little Iülus should keep up with the giant-strides of Æneas?—Mr. H. however, is not a weakly stripling. He moves with some grace, and perhaps as much vigor as we ought to look for, on the present occasion, to which tenderness is more suitable than force.

Aug. 1785 Vol. 73 p. 147[2]

Hastily written, and as hastily published. The first edition appeared a few days after the death of the Doctor —some of the mistakes, which it contained, have been corrected in this second.—But those readers, who require in biography elegant writing, and a clear statement of facts, will not be contented with this life of Johnson. The *fac simile* is curious; and the papers relative to the unfortunate Dr. Dodd well merited publication.

Oct. 1788 Vol. 79 p. 380[3]

This volume consists of several miscellaneous pieces, viz. various prefaces and dedications; letters originally written for different periodical works; controversial tracts; the famous Jacobitical pamphlet entitled *Marmor Norfolciensis*, for which Johnson would have been taken into custody, had he not absconded; forty-one letters to different persons; six epitaphs; and a few small poems.—For the two former volumes, published by Mr. Stockdale, making the XII and XIIIth of Johnson's works in *Octavo*, see M. Rev. for Sept. 1787. p. 250.

[1] Art. 25. *Elegy* to the Memory of Doctor Samuel Johnson. By Thomas Hobhouse, Esq. 4to. 6*d*. Stockdale.

[2] Art. 20. *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D. with occasional Remarks on his Writings; an authentic Copy of his Will, a Catalogue of his Works, and a Fac Simile of his Hand Writing. (The Second Edition, with considerable Additions and Corrections.) To which is added, Johnsoniana; or a Selection of Dr. Johnson's Bon Mots, Observations, &c. most of which were never before published. 12mo. 2*s*. 6*d*. Kearsley.

[3] Art. 47. *The Works of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D. Vol. XIV. 8vo. 7*s*. Boards. Stockdale. 1788.

March 1790 Vol. 1. p. 281[1]

This volume is offered to the Public as a supplement to the edition published by the late Sir John Hawkins, and the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth volumes by Mr. Stockdale. The editor of the present volume, Mr. George Gleig, has inscribed his publication, in very handsome terms, to Mr. Murphy, as the intimate friend of Doctor Johnson, but unknown to the editor. The dedication is dated, Stirling, 1 Dec. 1788.

In this collection, we have "The Voyage to Abyssinia, by Father Jerome Lobo, a Portuguese missionary, containing the history, natural, civil, and ecclesiastical, of that remote and unfrequented country, continued down to the beginning of the eighteenth century, with fifteen dissertations on various subjects, by M. Le Grand, translated from the French, by Samuel Johnson." Of this performance, little needs to be said by us, at this time, as the reader will find an account of it in our 77th vol. p. 131 *& seq.* In the remarks which we then made,[2] we had no doubt, in opposition to the reasoning of Sir John Hawkins, that the translation in question was an early production of the pen of Samuel Johnson. To what we advanced on that occasion, it may not be improper to add, that, since that time, we have been favoured by Mr. Reed, a gentleman possessed of almost every anecdote that relates to letters or literary men, with an authentic proof that Johnson was the translator of Lobo's Voyage. The work is, undoubtedly, valuable for the information which it contains.

Mr. Gleig very justly reproves Sir John Hawkins, for having inserted in his edition of Johnson's works, The *Apotheosis of Milton*, the Criticism on the Sublime and Beautiful, and other articles, manifestly the production of other writers. Sir John was also guilty of many omissions: but the Public are obliged to Mr. Stockdale for the *Debates in Parliament*, as well as various other tracts, equally elegant and interesting; and yet Mr. Stockdale is not free from error. In his edition, he ascribes to Johnson,

[1] Art. VII. *The Works of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D. Volume XV. 8vo. pp. 500. 6*s*. Boards. Elliot and Kay. 1789.

[2] Our thanks are due to Mr. Gleig for the polite manner in which he mentions our former articles on Johnson's works.

The *Memoirs of Doctor Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne:* but that Johnson was not the writer, evidently appears by a very candid letter to Mr. Gleig from Mr. George Berkeley, son of that excellent prelate.

The preface to *Kennedy's Scripture Chronology* appears to be, without foundation, ascribed to Johnson by Mr. Stockdale. Mr. Kennedy's son, the present Rector of Langley in Kent, affirms that his father was indebted to Johnson for none of the appendages of his learned work, except the dedication, which, indeed, proclaims its author in every sentence.

Mr. Gleig has inserted in this collection, the *Table of Cebes:* but he seems to doubt whether it was Johnson's. We can say, on good authority, that Johnson has been often heard to acknowledge it as his, and said it was a contribution from him to his friend Dodsley, for *The Preceptor.* The other pieces preserved in the volume before us, are, several reviews of books by Dr. Johnson, published in the Literary Magazine: many of these are valuable; such as, *the Natural History of Aleppo; the Analysis of a general Map of the middle British Colonies in America;* and, above all, the Review of Doctor Warton's *Essay on the Life and Genius of Pope.* There are also two Letters to the late Doctor Lawrence, and a short Latin poem to the same physician, called, *Nugæ Anapæsticæ in Lecto Curæ*, expressing Doctor Johnson's wishes for the health of the person to whom he was under many obligations.

We think the literary world indebted to Mr. Gleig for this collection; and we hope, from the lights communicated by so many editors, that the next edition of the works of Samuel Johnson will do justice to the memory of the author.

May 1790 Vol. 2 p. 94[1]

To exemplify the art of criticism, is an undertaking which requires some judgment, and considerable thought. The term *art* implies as much; since, to attain the knowledge

[1] Art. XVIII. *The Art of Criticism;* as exemplified in Dr. Johnson's Lives of the most eminent English Poets. 8vo. pp. 250. 5*s*. Boards. Hookham. 1789.

of an art, demands both study and reflection: nor can that which is learned with labour, be taught without method. We, consequently, in a treatise which professes to explain an art, expect at least to find arrangement of matter, and perspicuity of style. In both of these qualifications, the volume before us is greatly deficient. It consists of thoughts hastily admitted, and inaccurately expressed: mere notes on detached parts of the *lives of the poets*, carelessly thrown together at the time of reading the book, and printed, apparently, without having been revised.—What shall we say of the powers of a critic, who publicly tells us, that he is unable to understand the following sentence? "Who that ever asked succour from Bacchus, was able to prevent himself from being enslaved by his auxiliary." Yet such seems to be the case with the author, for he observes, "What is meant by *his auxiliary*, I know not." We do not, however, *seriously* impute to the writer an inability to understand plain English: but we scarcely see how his words can be construed in any other sense.

Let our readers, however, judge for themselves of the talents of the man who criticizes the writings of Johnson!

"LANSDOWNE,

"It may be perceived from our author's mean opinion of him, was a lover as well as lord: as to his poetry, I have a better opinion of it than our author, whose mind was, in some respects, as narrow as a crane's neck."

"HAMMOND'S

"Love-complaints were precious food for the maw of Johnson, who, in mumbling them, did not, however, perceive that the alternate quatrain has a solemnity suited to elegy."

"SOMERVILLE

"Was not likely to be followed far by him over six-bar gates; but has started a Savage in his hunt."

"DUKE'S

"Life is a precious morsel, in which there is however a piece of wittiness:—'an age when he, that would be thought a wit, was afraid to say his prayers.'"

"KING'S

"Life shews his sense, in preferring ease and an apple-pye to the jargon and iniquity of law."

"GARTH

"Was a good poet, a good physician, and an honest man; and more than merely and passively so."

"MALLET

"Seems to have been a ministerial tool."

Now, when we tell our readers that each of the above notable characters occupies a whole octavo page, we think that they will agree with us, that the author has shewn more skill in the *art of book-making*, than in the art of criticism.

We will extract a few more miscellaneous quotations.

"Our author, (Johnson), cynical as he was, waved, in passing final sentence on Milton's epic, his sneering, and even a due reprehension of *Paradise Lost*, which is very faulty in the conversion of all things to the purpose of poetical embellishment, whereby he has constituted a huge chaotic romance,

"It is true, that in the Old Testament, the chariots, arrows, shield, &c. of the Almighty, are figuratively spoken of; but it is casually. The Messiah and the angels are not represented as battling with swords, spears, musquets, and cannon, united with all the extravagance of Homer's fighting mythology, whilst Satan is sometimes described in such a manner, his prowess is so mighty, and his armour so brilliant, as to tend to excite admiration instead of horror. Again, as to theology; Milton is any thing or nothing; Trinitarian, Arian, Socinian, or neither, as suited his poetry; and I know not but he would have been

Mahometan, or Diabolian, had Cromwell, the devil's secretary, Milton being under-secretary, commanded it: therefore the instruction we look for in *Paradise Lost*, can hardly be eminent respecting the faith of this great master."—

"Savage, accurate and negligent, sensible and foolish was in an extraordinary manner at once careless about the present and the future, with a quick sense of both; it being difficult to determine which he valued most, a good dinner or fame; so says Horace, *Carpe diem;* and *Exegi monumentum.*

"He was kind to his perjured accuser, and ungrateful to a generous patron. He was precise and extravagant; tragical and capricious; employed on jollity and comma's, freaks and semicolons. Wit and prudence are not often united; far indeed from being united in him; yet with wit he combined minuteness. What a happy thoughtlessness did he possess; who could at ease entertain himself and his companions with pleasantry and gibes, when an empty pocket would have been continually in the thoughts of another.

> "So comes the reck'ning when the banquet's o'er:
> The dreadful reck'ning, and men smile no more,"

was not anticipated by him."

Speaking of a translation, by Pope, from the Latin, the author makes a curious observation.—"I fear not to risk my opinion, that 'our language is susceptible of more tenderness and pathos than either the Latin or Greek, which have nothing to come up to our *ahs!* and *ohs!*"

Nor is the following criticism on Gray, though just, less remarkable for its oddity:

> "Heard ye the din of battle bray?"

is rather an odd question. A battle may be figuratively said to bray; but *din of battles braying*, the *braying* of the *braying*, is a curious *assism.*"

On the whole, we cannot help saying of this writer, in the words which he has applied to Mr. Harley, that he is "a confounded queer dog!"

Aug. 1790 Vol. 2 p. 461[1]

We have heard of a poetic version of the bible, in Scotland, in which, among others equally curious, is the following couplet:

> "There was a man in the land of Uzz
> And his name it was Job."

It seems as if the writer of this Epistle to Mr. Boswell had taken this Scotch version for his model: witness the following specimens:

> "Of every wonder-seeking reader sure
> The journal of the Caledonian tour."
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Not yet content your future plans t'annull
> After the tale of oak-stick lost in *Mull.*"
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Each *mystic meaning* verse the fabric blots
> Too fitly nam'd *Sir William's chamber-pots.*"
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Boswell, no more thy *log-book journal,* which
> Infects us all with anecdotic itch."

Milton contemptuously tells Salmasius, that his writings are *fit only to make winding-sheets for pilchards* in Lent. Might we not, without incurring the imputation of unjust censure, say the same of this first-rate *bellmanic* poem?

Aug. 1792 Vol. 8 p. 570[2]

It seems a very fair maxim, that he who undertakes to correct the writings of others, ought himself to know how to write. What attention may be due, on this maxim, to the remarks of the author of this pamphlet, will be best perceived by an extract:—which we need take little pains to select; for in point of style (if such writing can deserve the name,) the writer closely adheres to the rule of Horace; *Servetur ad imum*, &c. Much displeased with the honours which have been paid to Johnson's powers, and particularly with the authority which has been given to his Dictionary, after quoting Mr. Boswell's encomium of Dr.

[1] Art. 28. *Epistle to James Boswell, Esq.*; occasioned by his long-expected, and now speedily-to-be-published Life of Dr. Johnson. 4to. pp. 38. 2*s.* Hookham. 1790.

[2] Art. 28. *A letter to James Boswell, Esq.* With some Remarks on Johnson's Dictionary, and on Language, &c. 8vo. pp. 87. 2*s.* 6*d.* Kirby. 1792.

Johnson's lexicographical excellence the letter-writer thus proceeds:

"All this is said of the Dictionary, and much more; (I hope the reader will not lose sight of it, though I do not comment on it now) and if authority could alone prevail, (and does it not; and, am I to ask, when, where, and how?) we need go no farther. But to use a very vulgar, since a very comprehensive, nay proverbial expression—and whenever I meet with a proverb, Mr. Boswell, I heartily embrace it, and do assure Mr. Boswell that Sancho himself did not love proverbs more than his humble servant, who would heartily recommend the embraces of them all, and all around, for they *are* wisdom:—Yes, to use such phrase, I would say,—'*the proof of the pudding is the eating*'; and that proof, or test, my readers shall soon have; whereby fairly, and honestly, and truly to judge for themselves, and to compare it with this account of the work, as here given in by Mr. Boswell; I mean a small selection, and a very small one it shall be, not to tire themselves or me, from the work in question; but I depart from the consideration of the language itself, and what I would say of it, in general, is, that it is, I fear, radically and *per se*, a less perspicuous one than we Englishmen might wish it to be."

From this specimen of the familiar involution and evolution of phraseology, with which this letter abounds, our readers will easily conclude, without any laboured critique on our part, that if Johnson is to be chastised, it must be by a more able hand than the author of this letter. He detects, it is true, some errors in Johnson's Dictionary: but what human production is free from errors? He points out some foibles in his character: but what human being is perfect? Let his imperfections be acknowledged: but let not this tiny scribbler again have the presumption to say of Dr. Johnson, "This is a poor creature," lest echo from every corner of the temple of criticism should reply —POOR CREATURE!

The pamphlet concludes with a large dose of dull small-talk upon sundry topics, critical, political, and topographical.

Sept. 1792 Vol. 9 p. 102 [1]

Mr. Boswell concludes his Life of Dr. Johnson with observing that "the more we consider his character, we shall be the more disposed to regard him with admiration and reverence": according, however, to this short sketch, if he were in some respects entitled to admiration, he was little to be regarded as an object of reverence. The unpleasant and objectionable features of Johnson's character are here the most prominent parts of this portrait. To the facts recorded by his biographers, an appeal is made, to prove this representation to be a likeness; and a likeness it is: but if Johnson were nothing more than he is here described to be, is it not strange, passing strange! that his society should be so much in request? The fact is, with a thousand oddities, particularities, and even defects, he possessed an uncommon vigor and brilliancy of mind. His person may have been sometimes disgusting, his manners forbidding, and his superstition and bigotry odious: but, in spite of all, he was a great character. As often as he displays the singular magnitude of his mind, the man of genius will lament, and the man of common talents will exult, over the alloy which debased it.

Feb. 1793 Vol. 10 p. 233 [2]

The principal object of this appendix is to prove, that Dr. Watts died a believer in the Trinity; [3] for this purpose, a catalogue of the MSS. which fell into the hands of his

[1] Art. 27. *The Character of Dr. Johnson;* with Illustrations from Mrs. Piozzi, Sir John Hawkins, and Mr. Boswell. 8vo. pp. 23. 1*s*. Dilly. 1792.

[2] Art. 61. *An Appendix to Dr. Samuel Johnson's Life of Dr. Watts, with Notes.* Containing an authentic Account of the Doctor's Manuscripts concerning the Trinity, and Extracts from them. By S. Palmer. 8vo. 6*d*.' Johnson.

[3] It is notorious that the contrary opinion has, very generally, obtained.—On this occasion, we recollect a *bon mot* by Dr. Johnson, to which Mr. Boswell is very welcome, for the next edition of his *Johnsoniana*.—The Dr. was once in conversation, warmly engaged in a dispute with an ingenious, heterodox, lady, now deceased, on the subject of Dr. Watts's notion of the Trinity. "Sir," said the lady, "*it is well known* that Dr. Watts did not die in the faith for which you so zealously contend: in his latter days, he certainly, *you may depend on the fact*, opened his eyes."—"Did he, Madam?" replied Johnson, eagerly interrupting his fair antagonist,—"did he *open his eyes?* then the first thing he saw was the Devil!" *The writer of this note* was present at the conversation.—The debate ended, as most debates do: neither party was convinced.

executors, is given, and an abstract of a correspondence between him and the Rev. Martin Tomkins, on the worship of the Holy Spirit, and on Trinitarian doxologies. Concerning the doxologies, in his book of hymns, Dr. Watts confesses that "he wished some things were corrected": but then, he continues, "the question with me is this: as I wrote them in sincerity at that time, is it not more for the edification of Christians, and the glory of God, to let them stand, than to ruin the usefulness of the whole work, by correcting them now, and, perhaps, bring further and false suspicions on my present opinions? Besides, I might tell you I sold the copy to Mr. Laurence; and his posterity make money of it to this day, and I can scarce claim a right to make any alteration in the book which would injure the sale of it."

On this passage, it is obvious to remark, that if Dr. Watts *wished that some things* in his doxologies *were corrected*, he must think that *some things were wrong*; and if they were wrong, or erroneous, how could they conduce to the edification of Christians and to the glory of God? What the Dr. urges about his having written them in the sincerity of his heart, and about injuring the sale of his hymns, is paltry, if not truly contemptible. He must know that this was nothing to the purpose. Trembling at the imputation of Heterodoxy, he suffered errors to pass sanctioned with his name; replying to his friend, who urged an alteration of them, *that he wrote them in sincerity at the time*, and had sold the copy. Though he had no right over the copy, he might have offered his emendations to Mr. Laurence, had he been solicitous for their insertion in some new edition; which, it appears, he was not.

How far Dr. Watts changed his sentiments with respect to the Trinity, before his death, cannot, perhaps, be fully ascertained: but this is evident, from his own words, that he did not consider the doxologies at the end of his hymns as exhibiting his own views of the Trinity; and, of course, not as the most proper for use in divine worship: yet he suffered them to remain unaltered, from the fear of *hurting the sale of his hymns!* Ought such a reason to be urged for the continuance of an erroneous doxology in a publica-

tion which the author knew was used in public worship ?[1] It may, hence, perhaps, be presumed, that Dr. Watts was more heterodox than he had manliness to avow.

In the conclusion to this appendix, after some remarks on the terms employed in the Trinitarian controversy, the author acknowledges that difficulties press every scheme; and he hence takes occasion to recommend mutual forbearance, and the necessity of uniting charity to whatever we may deem orthodoxy.

Sept. 1776 Vol. 55 p. 232[2]

These Letters are said to have been written by a Mr. Topham, who has, somewhat rashly, undertaken to speak decisively of the genius, character, laws, customs, and amusements of the Scots, from only a six months' acquaintance with the capital of their country. The spirit, however, of his representations is liberal and candid; and his manner of detail is easy, natural, and agreeable,—manifesting the gentleman and the scholar. He is, on the whole, rather partial to our northern brethren; and he smartly rebukes Dr. Johnson for the *severity* and *ingratitude* which appear in some of his observations on Scotland, in his account of his late *Journey to the Western Islands*. On the other hand, he highly commends Mr. Pennant's descriptions, as equally accurate, ingenious, and faithful. We wish we could say *all* this in favour of Mr. Topham's performance; which, however ingenious and good humoured, is by no means entitled to the praise of accuracy; yet we hope the Writer is no where intentionally unfaithful. In some circumstances he may have misled himself; in more, he may have been misinformed by others: but in none, perhaps, has he aimed at imposing on the Public. On the whole, his work is written in a lively, pleasing style; and it abounds with anecdotes and remarks that cannot fail of agreeably entertaining his Readers.

[1] It may be replied to those Dissenters who contend for certain alterations in the articles and service of the established church, that the authors wrote them in the sincerity of their hearts: but if such a plea be admitted, all subsequent discovery is useless.

[2] Art. 21. *Letters from Edinburgh;* written in the Years 1774 and 1775. Containing some Observations on the Diversions, Customs, Manners, and Laws, of the Scotch Nation, during a Six Months' Residence in Edinburgh. 8vo. 6*s*. Bound. Dodsley.

Don't make yourself too cheap, friend Peter!—"At-all," was the famous Dr. Hill's maxim; till, at last, his name [2] carried condemnation to every thing which bore its stamp. Peter Pindar is, as yet, a favourite with the lovers of burlesque satire; but—beware of "At-all."

April 1786 Vol. 74 p. 307 [1]

And why, when plying the lash on the broad shoulders of Johnson and Boswell, didst thou go out of thy way, friend Peter, to aim (head and shoulders) such a spiteful cut at M—j—y itself? What hath the poor —— done to you, Master Pindar?—Eternally at the ——! Fye, fye! it is little, it is *low*, though your aim is so high!—But, take this friendly hint: you have pleased us before, and you will please us again.

These Remarks are few and slight. The Author maintains that Dr. Johnson was not a poet; that he rashly uttered many indefensible dogmas; and that he has been too fondly idolized by Mr. Boswell; who (in the Remarker's opinion) hath published a great book, fraught with little matter that was worth communicating to the Public.—To convince us that the Remarker is himself a poet, though Dr. Johnson was not, he has added to these strictures "*An Elegy* on the Loss of the Doctor's large Oak Stick": —we beg his pardon,—he does not give the verses as his own, but as the communication of a friend.—Be the *jeu d'esprit* whose it may, we do not think it contemptible; nor is the concluding verse uncharacteristic of Dr. Johnson's national turn, and coarse manner of casting reproach.

April 1786 Vol. 74 p. 312 [3]

As the defender of Mr. Boswell deems the Remarker's performance trivial, impertinent, and malignant, why did he give himself the trouble of refuting an insignificant pamphlet, which, if his opinion of it be just, must inevitably refute itself?

April 1786 Vol. 74 p. 312 [4]

[1] Art. 41. *A Poetical and Congratulatory Epistle to James Boswell*, Esq. on his Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with the celebrated Dr. Johnson. By Peter Pindar, Esq. 4to. 2*s*. Kearsley. 1786.

[2] His real name, we mean, for he had innumerable feigned ones.

[3] Art. 52. *Remarks on the Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides.* In a Letter to James Boswell, Esq. 8vo. 1*s*. Debrett.

[4] Art. 53. *A Defence of Mr. Boswell's Journal*, in a Letter to the Author of the *Remarks*, &c. 8vo. 1*s*. Swift.

April 1786 Vol. 74 p. 312 [1]

'Tis pity that these *Remarkers* and *Defenders* did not affix their names to their performances, which would have obviated the suspicion, which some have entertained, that there is more of author-craft in this controversy, than innocent, unsuspecting readers may be aware of.—We do not say that such *is* the case, in the present instance; but the time has been, when the *Curls* and the *Coopers*, of publishing and vamping memory, have been addressed by a pamphleteer, with a "Here is my *Satire on the Minister;* and in case that should not go off so briskly as we hope it will—here is my *Answer to the Satire;* then, to give a fillip to both, here are my *Remarks on the Answer:* after which, we may keep up the ball with a *Parody*, a *Rejoinder*, &c. &c. What say you to this scheme, Master Curl?"—"Admirable!" replied Curl:—"Excellent!" quoth Mother Cooper:—the press groaned—and three large collops were added to the *bubble and squeak.*

Feb. 1775 Vol. 52 p. 184 [2]

On the presumption that Dr. Johnson's eminence of rank in the learned world, might give a sanction to sentiments and principles which may prove unfriendly to the cause of true Patriotism; the sensible Author of these Remarks undertakes to refute the Doctor's chief positions, to guard the unwary reader against the speciousness of his misrepresentations, and to blunt the edge of his ridicule.

In the execution of this design, the remarker has not been unsuccessful. If he is inferior to the Doctor in style, and the dignity of declamation; he is a match for him in reasoning:—In the capacity of a ministerial writer, the learned Author of *the Patriot*, we may venture to predict, will never add a wreath to the laurels he acquired by his moral and poetical productions.

Another serious and sensible investigation of the merit

[1] Art. 54. *The Remarker remarked;* or, A Parody on the Letter to Mr. Boswell, on his *Tour*, &c. 8vo. 1*s*. No Publisher's Name.

[2] Art. 37. *Remarks on the Patriot.*[3] Including some Hints respecting the Americans, with an Address to the Electors of Great Britain. 8vo. 1*s*. Richardson and Urquhart. 1775.

[3] See Review for October last, p. 298.

and value of Dr. Johnson's political writings. This remarker is no less severe upon the Doctor, than is the Author of the foregoing article. The publications which are the subjects of his animadversion, are the *False Alarm*. *Thoughts on Falklands Islands*, and the *Patriot*. After a strict examination of the Doctor's reasoning, in the abovementioned pamphlets, and a clear refutation of some of his principal arguments, our Author draws the following, among other conclusions: that Dr. Johnson's political writings have unfortunately tended only to degrade his own character, without rendering much service to his employers; that no writer, of the Doctor's abilities, ever engaged in politics, whose productions were of so little effect and so unprofitable to his patrons; and that this celebrated writer may, in many respects, be considered as a memorable instance of human weakness: "for though," says the Author, "you have given evidences of great force of genius, you have, at the same time, discovered such little prejudices, and such bigotted attachments, as would have disgraced a common understanding."

Feb. 1775 Vol. 52 p. 184[1]

In his *appendix*, our last letter-writer attacks Dr. Shebbeare, of whose pamphlet[2] we gave an account in our last month's Review. The angry Doctor having *fallen foul* on the memories of King William, Algernon Sidney, Lord Somers, and in short, all the great supporters of the whig interest, our Author undertakes their defence; together with that of the dissenters, in general, who had also, in the same publication, been roughly handled by this inveterate enemy of the *Non-cons*. But, says our Author, "if it be a reproach to be warmly attached to civil as well as religious liberty, and to detest tyranny, under whatever form it may appear, it is a reproach that many of them (the dissenters) are well content to bear. The friends of freedom, and of public virtue, are naturally objects of dislike to the servile and the venal; and it can

[1] Art. 38. *A Letter to Dr. Samuel Johnson;* occasioned by his late *Political* publications. With an *Appendix*, containing some Observations on a Pamphlet lately published by Dr. *Shebbeare*. 8vo. 1*s*. 6*d*. Towers, 1775.

[2] *Answers to Queries, &c.*

be no dishonour to be reviled by the avowed tools of a minister, by state hirelings, and pensioned parasites."

May 1775 Vol. 52 p. 448[1]

This pamphlet contains some good reasoning, but it is, in general, inferior to the former: The following extract may, however, in some degree enable our readers to judge for themselves.

"The next step our Author takes, is to ridicule, with all his might, the idea of the *Bostonian heroes betaking themselves into other parts of that continent, and turning fishermen and hunters*, rather than submit to illegal taxation. So magnanimous a proof of an indomitable free spirit might give them credit with mankind, and represent them as *heroes* indeed: and therefore 'tis his business to make them sick of it, by converting it into a full proof of slavery. He says, *who can be more a slave, than he that is driven by force from the comforts of life, and compelled to leave his home to a casual comer?* This is certainly a new and unheard-of description of slavery, reserved for this Author to discover. I beg to know where is there a stronger demonstration of freedom? It is the very trial of a free mind to renounce *all comforts of life*, rather than submit to lawless power. It is the constant evidence of a base and slavish one, to accept the last for the first. Every revolting, relaxing, corrupted patriot, in every age, proves the melancholy disagreeable truth. A man takes a place: he thenceforth

Votes a patriot black, a courtier white.

Perhaps in doing this, he contradicts a series of his own exertions in support of liberty. What is the motive? *The comforts of life*, or what he thinks its comforts. What shall we pronounce him? All will agree, *a slave*. Another man bears many difficult circumstances, and foregoes many real *comforts of life*, rather than unite in establishing oppression upon himself or his posterity. Who is the *free man*, if *he* is not? If these terms belong not respectively to these circumstances, then have we been wrongly taught the

[1] Art. 13. *Tyranny Unmasked:* An Answer to a late Pamphlet, intitled, "Taxation no Tyranny." 8vo. 1*s*. 6*d*. Flexney

use of words; and I would advise our author to prevail with Dr. *Johnson*, in the next impression of his Dictionary, to define a *slave* to be one, who *retires from all the comforts of life, rather than submit to illegal power.*—Here, we see, there is but *the choice of evil.* And therefore when our Author thinks he has hampered the idea of freedom, by leaving it only that choice; I beg leave to tell him, that in the choice of evil *is* freedom; nor can this have any other possible choice, where oppression shakes its rod. But then there is no other surer proof, that oppression rules, than when freedom has but so sad a choice.

"However, let not our author go off with treating such designs in the Bostonians as contemptuous. For whatever they may do, as much and more hath been done at all times for liberty in every way. The *Vaudois* Protestants, in the valleys of Piedmont, and their ancestors, did and suffered as much for *liberty of conscience*, as the Bostonians can do this way for *liberty of property.* Every martyr'd patriot, who has bathed the scaffold with his blood, has done and suffered much more. When the Bostonians themselves shall execute this design, they will only do and suffer the very same things which their ancestors did before them. And I have no doubt, if no better alternative be given them, that not only the heroes of Boston, but the much quieter heroes of Philadelphia, will shew themselves ready to suffer all things, and *be free.*

This pamphlet contains many very harsh and some very just strictures on the doctrines and tenets advanced in the pamphlet ascribed to Dr. J.——, and which has already been honoured with unmerited notice. Aug. 1775 Vol. 53 p. 181[1]

This is a bloody Jacobitical pamphlet, on the most avowed anti-revolutional principles, prophesying the evils Oct. 1775 Vol. 53 p. 360[2]

[1] Art. 13. *A Defence of the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress;* in reply to "Taxation no Tyranny." By the Author of Regulus. 8vo. 2*s.* Williams.

[2] Art. 42. *Marmor Norfolciense;* or, an Essay on an ancient prophetical Inscription in Monkish Rhyme lately discovered near Lynn in Norfolk. By Probus Britannicus. Printed and published in the year 1739. A new Edition, with Notes, and a Dedication to Samuel Johnson, LL.D. By Tribunus. 8vo. 1*s.* 6*d.* Williams. 1775.

impending on this nation in consequence of the accession of the present R.F. and said (*nem. con.*) to have been written by the *now notorious* Gentleman, to whom this new edition is addressed. It is, indeed, a little unfortunate for him, if he *is* the Author, that it should be dragged out of its lurking-hole at the present time; that is, if he may be supposed to feel it; for, as *he* would say, *the man who has arrived to such a degree of moral turpitude, as to militate against the best interests of mankind, must be indurated to conviction, and obtunded to remorse.* The substance of the pamphlet has been retailed in almost every newspaper.

June 1785 Vol. 72 p. 459[1]

The present pamphlet was occasioned by a bill proposed in the House of Commons, by Mr. Ilay Campbell, to reduce the number of *Lords of Session* from fifteen to ten. Mr. Boswell addresses the people of Scotland, with a zeal that becomes every man in a cause in which he thinks himself right: he shews, and with a proper spirit, his dislike of innovation; and, in a matter of such importance, thinks it dangerous to attempt it. Independent of the prepossessions all men have in favour of antient usages, Mr. Boswell brings arguments, and, in our opinion, convincing ones, to shew the impropriety of the present proposed innovation. A peculiar vein of humour runs through the whole of this performance, which must please, and cannot offend: and the letter is such, that if it does not universally produce conviction, it will afford instruction and amusement.

July 1776 Vol. 55 p. 73[2]

The pieces here reprinted were all written by the celebrated author of *The Rambler;* and have been duly noticed in our Reviews.

[1] Art. 15. *A Letter to the People of Scotland,* on the alarming Attempt to infringe the Articles of the Union, and introduce a most pernicious Innovation, by diminishing the Number of the Lords of Session. By James Boswell, Esq. 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.* Dilly. 1785.

[2] Art. 54. *Political Tracts.* Containing, *The False Alarm, Falkland's Islands, The Patriot,* and *Taxation no Tyranny.* 8vo. 4*s.* Boards. Cadell, &c. 1776.

Sept. 1787 Vol. 77 p. 250[1]

We have already briefly noticed this collection in a former article ;[2] it will therefore now only be necessary to inform our Readers that they are here presented with the *Debates in the Senate of Lilliput*, from Nov. 19, 1740, to Feb. 23, 1743, divested of the disguise of Lilliputian names, in which they first appeared, in the Gentleman's Magazine. These volumes are advertised as the 12th and 13th, in addition to Sir John Hawkins's edition of Dr. Johnson's works.

Sept. 1776 Vol. 55 p. 232[3]

Among the inconveniences attending eminence of station, whether in place, dignity, or wit, those who rank in the latter class, are liable to *one* that is peculiar to themselves, and perhaps, of all others, the most mortifying—that of having their name clapped to an abominable jest book !

July 1776 Vol. 55 p. 71[4]

We are much pleased with this elegant Edition of the works of a man, whose merit as a poet, and whose misfortunes as a man, have rendered him, in a peculiar manner, the object of Public attention ; an attention too, that has been greatly heightened by those admirable Memoirs, long known to the learned world, and here reprinted : Dr. Johnson's *Life of Savage* being, indeed, deservedly esteemed one of the most excellent pieces of biography in the English language.

Of Mr. Savage's Works we need say nothing. His *Wanderer* and *Bastard*, in particular, will for ever secure to him that " eminence of rank in the classes of learning," in which he has been justly placed by his celebrated Biographer.

The merit of Dr. Johnson, as a moral and critical writer,

[1] Art. 43. *Debates in Parliament.* By Samuel Johnson, LL.D. 2 Vols. 8vo. 12*s*. Boards. Stockdale. 1787.

[2] Vid. Rev. Aug. p. 139.

[3] Art. 18. *Johnsoniana ;* or, a Collection of *Bons Mots*, &c. By Dr. Johnson, and others. 12mo. 2*s*. Riley.

[4] Art. 45. *The Works of Richard Savage*, Esq. ; Son of the Earl Rivers. With an Account of the Life and Writings of the Author, by Samuel Johnson, LL.D. 12mo. 2 Vols. 7*s*. Evans. 1775.

March 1782 Vol. 66 p. 237 [1]

is so well known, that it would be superfluous to point it out. His great excellence, however, lies in deep observations and acute remarks on men and manners, worthy both of the Sage and the Wit: With these, he interweaves reflections, which are admirably calculated to impress the heart with a sense of the beauty of virtue, and the obligations of religion. The Collector of his Maxims sufficiently expresses the design of this publication in the Title-page; and we heartily wish it success among the young, for whose improvement and convenience, particularly in schools, it seems principally intended.

March 1782 Vol. 66 p. 238 [2]

This cursory Examination, though apparently the production of haste, is written with liberality and candour. Those who interest themselves in the poetical reputation of our modern Pindar, will read it with pleasure.

May 1782 Vol. 66 p. 397 [3]

This *large octavo* edition comprehends all the Biographical Prefaces of Dr. Johnson, detached from the ten volumes of the original small *duodecimo* edition, which was lately given to the Public, in connection with the elegant impression, in sixty-eight volumes, of the works of the most eminent English Poets, with heads by Bartolozzi, Sherwin, &c.—Of that edition we have given an ample account, in several detached articles.

Aug. 1782 Vol. 67 p. 146 [4]

Unwilling to acquiesce in the decisions of Dr. Johnson against the poetical pretensions of Hammond, our Author has gallantly entered the lists with him, and has, notwithstanding the Goliath of Literature is his antagonist, very ably defended his favourite bard from the furious attacks of the critic.

[1] Art. 26. *The Beauties of Johnson:* Consisting of Maxims and Observations, Moral, Critical, and Miscellaneous, accurately extracted from the Works of Dr. Samuel Johnson; and arranged in alphabetical Order, after the Manner of the Duke de la Rochefoucault's Maxims. 8vo. 2 Vols. 4*s.* 6*d.* Sewed. Kearsly. 1782.

[2] Art. 27. *Cursory Examination of Dr. Johnson's Strictures on the Lyric Performances of* Gray. 8vo. 1*s.* Crowder. 1781.

[3] Art. 39. *The Lives of the most eminent English Poets;* with critical Observations on their Works. By Samuel Johnson. 8vo. 4 Vols. 1*l.* 1*s.* Boards. Cadell, &c. 1781.

[4] Art. XI. *Observations on Dr. Johnson's Life of Hammond.* 4to. 1*s.* 6*d.* Brown. 1782.

"The Elegies of Hammond, says he, have hitherto been allowed to express the passion of Love in the language of nature. The determination of Doctor Johnson, therefore, cannot be heard without surprize, when he declares, that they have neither passion, nature, nor manners; and the admirers of these poems must be ready to conclude, if his opinion be just, that there is no inconsiderable defect both in their feelings and their judgments.

"It is remarkable that the learned writer should not have mentioned (for it could not have escaped his extensive reading), that these Elegies are close imitations, and in many parts exact translations of some of the Elegies of Tibullus. But, perhaps, if he were determined to condemn him, he might be aware, that so near an alliance to the Roman poet would obviate the force of his severity, and destroy the acrimony of his censure.

"Tibullus, whose fame the admiration of ages has rendered sacred and inviolate, has confessedly described the passion of love in a manner superior to every other poet. But there is, perhaps, a period, beyond which the description of what we cease to feel, however delightfully represented, can no longer amuse; and it is even possible, when passion shall have totally subsided, we may forget there ever was a season when the charms of beauty were enchanting.

"Where their merits, in other respects, are nearly equal, imitative is doubtless inferior to original composition; and the admirer of Hammond cannot but confess, that the lustre of his poetry would be diminished, were the rays which he has borrowed from Tibullus restored to their original source: it may, however, with justice be contended, that they suffer no diminution of splendour from the medium through which they pass.

"To connect the spirit with the sentiments of an original, constitutes the chief excellence of a translation. By this union, Hammond certainly obtains a peculiar distinction. The silence of his biographer in this respect, has conferred upon him the highest praise. If he were *ignorant* of the Elegies being imitations, they must bear uncommon marks of originality to elude the penetration

of so sagacious a critic; and if he were *apprized* of it, since his observations breathe nothing but censure, it is evident that an acknowledgment was not consistent with his plan.

"I shall first examine the Ninth Elegy, from which Doctor Johnson has *impartially* selected a quotation. He is very severe upon Mr. Hammond's mode of courtship. A lover who threatens his mistress with dying, he says, furnishes her with a sufficient excuse for rejecting him.[1] Though many have doubtless obtained the affections of the fair by milder and more gentle expedients; and probably the Doctor has been one of the happy number;[2] yet should not humanity have prompted him to express some pity for those whom fate had driven to such desperate extremities?

> Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.
> VIRG. ÆN.
>
> Touched with misfortunes I myself have known,
> I view, with pity, woes so like my own.

The critical Reader, on a perusal of this well-written pamphlet, will agree with us, that the arguments it contains are spirited, ingenious, and conclusive.

Feb. 1785 Vol. 72 p. 150[3]

Although the *quantity* of Dr. Johnson's *poetry*, as his present anonymous editor observes, bears no proportion to his prose writings, its *quality* has always recommended

[1] The sentiments of Rousseau upon this subject are different from those of Doctor Johnson; and he, I believe, is generally acknowledged to have known something of the female heart. To this resolution of her lover—*Demain vous serez contente, et quoique vous en puissiez dire, j'aurai moins fait que de partir*—the charming Eloisa makes the following reply—*Insense! si mes jours te sont chers, crain d'attenter aux tiens.*

[2] An inference drawn, we suppose, from some love-verses of Dr. Johnson's (for even the Doctor has written his love-verses; *et in Arcadia ego*, he may say), in which, among others, are the following *chaste* and Arcadian ideas:

> While all my wish and thine complete,
> *By turns we languish and we burn,*
> Our sighs let sighing gales repeat,
> Our murmurs murmuring brooks return.
> MIDSUMMER'S WISH,
> Pearch's Collection.

[3] Art. 26. *The Poetical Works* of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. Now first collected into one Volume. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.* Sewed. Kearsley. 1785.

it to the esteem of the best judges. The principal productions of his muse are, *London, a Satire*,—The *Vanity of Human Wishes*,—and *Irene, a Tragedy*. Neither these, nor the smaller pieces which serve to fill up the neat little volume before us, are new to the public; but many readers will, no doubt, be glad to possess themselves collectively, of what they have been delighted with in divided and separate parts.

From what still-born tragedy, or obsolete opera, the origin of this lamentable drama may be traced and derived, or whether from Glover's *Leonidas*,—we have not leisure at present to examine; but have no scruple to pronounce, that it was neither written, altered, nor *corrected*, by the author of *Irene*, the Rambler, the English Dictionary, &c. &c. &c. May 1785 Vol. 72 p. 391[1]

The present race of poets is here assembled before Apollo, to put in their respective claims to the laurel of Johnson. The idea is supported with some humour and spirit. But, as we have not room in our crowded gallery for the whole group, and it might be thought invidious to admit only a part, we are under the necessity of referring those, who are desirous of seeing the portraits, to the Author's own exhibition. The names which he has distinguished are Pratt, Whitehead, Mason, Cumberland, Stratford, Topham, Tickell, Colman, Sheridan, Pye, Seward, and Hayley. The laurel is given to Hayley, and Seward is placed in Apollo's chair.—Will not this lady feel herself awkwardly stationed, while her sister-poets are kept behind the curtain? Aug. 1785 Vol. 73 p. 152[2]

Those Readers who expect to find, in these genuine aspirations of a devout heart, the pomp and splendor, the energy and vigour, which distinguish the moral, poetical, Aug. 1785 Vol. 73 p. 157[3]

[1] Art. 45. *The Patriot;* a Tragedy; from a Manuscript of the late Dr. Samuel Johnson: corrected by himself. 8vo. 1*s.* 6*d.* Goulding, &c. 1785.

[2] Art. 29. *Johnson's Laurel:* or Contest of the Poets. A Poem. 4to 1*s.* Hooper. 1785.

[3] Art. 46. *Prayers and Meditations*, composed by Samuel Johnson, LL.D. and published from his Manuscripts, by George Strahan, A. M. Vicar of Islington, Middlesex, and Rector of Little Thurrock, in Essex. 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* Boards. Cadell. 1785.

and critical writings of Dr. Johnson, will be greatly disappointed. They will only see, here, the pious Christian, humbly communing with his Creator, acknowledging his infirmities, and imploring the divine mercy, in language the most unadorned, yet, surely, not unsuitable to the circumstances of a weak, erring, but accountable creature, supplicating the favour of an Infinite, All-perfect Being,—his God, and his Judge! The prescribed forms of our liturgy, appear, in general, to have been his models.

With respect to the meditations, and the little details, by way of journal, or diary, the lovers of the Doctor's memory, and the friends of his fame, will, no doubt, agree with us, that many things in them are of too *trivial*, we had almost said, too *ludicrous* a nature for the public eye, and unsuitably given as adjuncts to the devotional exercises. Indeed, we wonder that they were not suppressed. Witlings will be apt to turn both them and their Author into ridicule, as the effusions of bigotry, and superstitious weakness. Possibly, some of his graceless sons, who bowed submissive to him, when living, will now, like the profligate Ham, scoff at their father's nakedness. Let us, rather, imitating the pious decency of Shem and Japheth, with averted eyes, throw a veil over the casual frailty of a person, so justly entitled to our reverential regard for his genius and his virtues.

In a word, while we pity the moral weaknesses of Dr. Johnson, let us revere his intellectual strength; while we lament his superstitious turn of mind, let us take example from his piety and his benevolence; let us never forget the pleasure he has given us by his literary labours; and let us remember, that no modern writer hath shewn a greater and more uniform regard to the interests of religion and morality. This we shall ever esteem as a distinguished excellence—for which Dr. Johnson is entitled to, and will certainly receive, the warmest praise, from every good citizen,—every friend to the highest and best interests of mankind!

The book before us is very properly introduced to the Public, by the Editor, in a judicious *Preface;* from which

we shall extract a passage or two, for the farther satisfaction of our Readers:

"During many years of his life, he statedly observed certain days [1] with a religious solemnity; on which, and other occasions, it was his custom to compose suitable Prayers and Meditations; committing them to writing for his own use, and, as he assured me, without any view to their publication. But being last summer on a visit at Oxford to the Reverend Dr. Adams,[2] and that gentleman urging him repeatedly to engage in some work of this kind, he then first conceived a design to revise these pious effusions, and bequeath them, with enlargements, to the use and benefit of others.

"Infirmities, however, now growing fast upon him, he at length changed this design, and determined to give the Manuscripts, without revision, in charge to me, as I had long shared his intimacy, and was at this time his daily attendant. Accordingly, one morning, on my visiting him by desire at an early hour, he put these Papers into my hands, with instructions for committing them to the press, and with a promise to prepare a sketch of his own life to accompany them. But the performance of this promise also was prevented, partly by his hasty destruction of some private memoirs, which he afterwards lamented, and partly by that incurable sickness, which soon ended in his dissolution."—"That the authenticity of this work may never be called in question, the original manuscript will be deposited in the library of Pembroke College in Oxford. Dr. Bray's associates are to receive the profits of the First Edition, by the Author's appointment; and any further advantages that accrue, will be distributed among his relations."

In this prefatory discourse, Mr. Strahan hath given a friendly apology for the Author's occasional deviations from the rules of our Church, in offering up prayers for

[1] Viz. New Year's Day; March 28, the day on which his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson, died; Good Friday; Easter Day; and September 18th, his own birth-day.

[2] Master of Pembroke College, at which Dr. Johnson received part of his education.

deceased friends.[1] Among other remarks, he observes, that "of all superstitions, this is one of the least unamiable, and most incident to a good mind." True; and we should hope, that even the most rigid churchman will forgive so slight a departure from what may, by some be deemed *Protestant orthodoxy*, in favour of that excess of friendship and tenderness, to which no period could be put, till the lamenter was levelled with the lamented.

Sept. 1785 Vol. 73 p. 232 [2]

To some person, who imagines himself both a poet and a critic, the Public are indebted for this Dialogue. We are afraid that those who happen to read this production will not perceive in it many traces of poetical fancy, or critical acumen. What prevented its appearance in Doctor Johnson's life-time, it is not easy to determine. The form might easily have been changed. Was it delicacy?—The great Lexicographer would not have been too much hurt. —Was it fear of a reply?—Depend upon it, he never would have answered.—It seems almost equally difficult to settle, why it was published after his death. Is it to crush the Lives of the Poets?—The Public do not easily give up a favourite work.—Was it to obtain a reputation?—We will venture to affirm, that this is not to be acquired by trifles. —But this knotty point will probably be cleared up in a second edition;—and so to other matter.

June 1786 Vol. 74 p. 467 [3]

The Ghost writes by no means as the Doctor wrote while *in the body;* his *present* verses are, as Scrub in the play says, "clear another sort"; but yet they are not contemptible. There is wit both in the Epistle, and in the notes;

[1] This, however, is generally accompanied with some *provisional* clause or "preface of permission," as—"so far as might be lawful"; or, by expressing his hope that God may *have had* mercy, &c. But sometimes, there is no such *proviso*, or condition. On the whole, we may believe that he was inclined to favour the notion of an intermediate state; as many other wise, and good, and learned Protestants have done.

[2] Art. 37. *A Dialogue between Dr. Johnson and Dr. Goldsmith*, in the Shades, relative to the former's Strictures on the English Poets, particularly Pope, Milton, and Gray. 4to. 1*s.* 6*d.* Debrett.

[3] Art. 35. *A Poetical Epistle* from the *Ghost* of Dr. Johnson, to his *four* Friends—the Rev. Mr. Strahan, James Boswell, Esq. Mrs. Piozzi, J. Courtney, Esq. M.P. From the original Copy in the possession of the Editor. With *Notes*, Critical, Historical, and Explanatory. 4to. 3*s.* Harrison.

and the allusions to passages in the different publications made by the Doctor's *four friends*, are frequently pointed with humour, irony, and pleasant sarcasm. The design of the whole is aptly indicated in his motto, and in his concluding six lines:

MOTTO. "My little fame may heav'n defend,
From ev'ry feign'd or foolish friend."

CONCLUSION. Adieu, my friends, I can no longer write;
The devil waits, and must get back to night!
Spite of materials bad, and little time,
To form these flow'ry wreaths of grateful rhime;
Who "runs and reads," may this plain meaning see—
"I praise my friends just as my friends praise me."

Sept. 1786 Vol. 75 p. 229[1]

Mr. Courtenay, while he exposes the weaknesses of Dr. Johnson, pays due respect to his excellencies.—The poem, however, like its hero, is very unequal. It is frequently flat, and sometimes ungrammatical. It wants ease and harmony; it never rises to elegance; and is very seldom either lively or forcible either in the sentiments or the language. There are, however, some spirited lines, and some acute and sprightly observations; but, on the whole, we are persuaded that Mr. Courtenay, though born a wit, was not born a poet.

March 1787 Vol. 76 p. 267[2]

In this new edition of Johnson's *Beauties* the work is enlarged with numerous anecdotes selected from Mr. Boswell's and Mrs. Piozzi's late publications, with other documents illustrating the biography of Johnson. A copy of his will is also annexed, and a sermon which he wrote for Dr. Dodd, who preached it to his fellow-convicts, a few days previous to their execution. A head of Dr. Johnson is prefixed as a frontispiece.

Dec. 1787 Vol. 77 p. 457[3]

Dr. Johnson has been compared to an old lion, whom few ventured to attack. *Magna fuit tamen facies et non*

[1] Art. 26. *A poetical Review of the literary and moral Character of the late Samuel Johnson*, LL.D. With Notes. By John Courtenay, Esq. 4to. 2*s*. Dilly. 1786.

[2] Art. 56. *The Beauties of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* consisting of Maxims and Observations, &c. 12mo. 3*s*. 6*d*. Sewed. Kearsley. 1787.

[3] Art. VIII. *Two Dialogues*, containing a comparative View of the Lives, Characters, and Writings of Philip the late Earl of Chesterfield, and Dr. S. Johnson. 8vo. 4*s*. Boards. Cadell. 1787.

adeunda senectus. Many, however, who would have trembled to have assaulted him while living, have mustered up resolution enough to treat him with a hearty kick *after he was dead.* Never was a poor carcase more severely mauled! Friends and foes have conspired in mangling his memory, in *drawing his frailties from their dread abode,* and in bringing him to an inquisition so rigid, that were the like practised in the courts of Minos and Rhadamanthus no mortal could pass into the Elysian Fields. His fall has inspired both wit and dulness with the itch of writing; and could every book which has Johnson for its subject, be collected together, placed upon his grave, and converted into marble, he would have the most ponderous monument in Westminster Abbey.—Enough indeed has been said of him, but as he is a fashionable theme, writers will not yet have done with it.

The Author of the Dialogues now before us, notwithstanding the length of the Johnsonian procession, joins himself to it; not, however, we apprehend, with a view to swelling his praise, but rather that he might blot out part of his epitaph, and pluck from his bust some sprigs of that wreath of laurel with which his admirers have adorned it. His professed aim is, to form a comparative estimate of the merits and defects of the late Earl of Chesterfield and this moralist; but these appear to us to be not always dealt forth and weighed by *even handed Justice.* The partiality of the writer is apparent. While, therefore, we express our approbation of the elegance and spirit with which these Dialogues are written, we must add, that we cannot subscribe to the sentiment which prevails in them, nor recommend them as containing so fair and candid an appreciation of Dr. Johnson's learned character, as we could have wished.

The matter to be discussed is managed by three speakers; a *Colonel,* who is the devoted admirer of Lord Chesterfield,—an *Archdeacon,* who is represented as an equally ardent admirer of Dr. Johnson, and a *Lady Caroline* who helps on the dialogue, preserves order, and is made a kind of umpire between the disputants. The Colonel is the *soldier, open, bold, and brave,* but undertaking more

than he can achieve. The Archdeacon is a less courageous advocate, defending the object of his declared idolatry, very unlike a fervent admirer; while the lady, notwithstanding her respect for a *black coat*, seems for once to think that the *red one* has the best of the argument.

The Colonel will have it, that "*his favourite, the nobleman, was in truth, 'take him for all in all,' as good a man, as sound a moralist, and as eloquent a writer as the renowned philosopher*"; and one would suppose that he had fully established his position; for in the second Dialogue he breaks forth into the following apostrophe: "*O Chesterfield, I have read thee with the eyes of a father, anxious, not only for the temporal but eternal interest of his children, and my heart tells me, that, in the sight of our great all-seeing Parent, the work for which thou art vilified on earth must have more of merit than of sin!*"—But allowing that it has *more of merit than of sin*, this by no means sets his favourite upon an equality with the author of the Rambler. As one *anxious for the eternal interest of his children*, it is surprising that the Colonel should be so attached to Chesterfield, whose *Graces* are no relations of the *Christian Graces*, nor do his works teach us the way to heaven.

So far from his being any where found to be an advocate for religion, and resembling Addison, whom Mandeville called a *parson in a tye-wig*, he does not even insist on virtue as a thing of eternal and immutable obligation, but only seems to plead for it so far as it is connected with and makes a part of good-breeding. How then can he be pronounced *so sound a moralist* as Johnson, the characteristic feature of whose writings is a *nervous morality*, built on the truest principles, and pointing to immortality? The sentiment he is said (p. 8) to have given, on being asked, what were the highest pleasures of human life, does not imply a recommendation of vice, and consequently is not on a par with the nobleman's objectionable letter. An incessant zeal for moral excellence was his ruling passion and no one ever wrote with a more sincere desire to infuse that zeal into others. In this respect he evidently bears the palm from the noble Earl.

As *men*, they both had their defects, which it can be no

pleasure to us to draw forth and compare. To say the truth, each moved in so very different a sphere, that their *lives* admit of no close comparison.

In estimating their respective merits, as *writers and as critics*, this objection does not hold. Here RANK has nothing to do. Their merit, as writers, must be determined solely by the merit of their works. These are before the Public, and every one is at full liberty to compare them. We can subscribe to what is said in these Dialogues of the ease and elegance of those of the Earl of Chesterfield, while we cannot but express our surprise, that the Archdeacon, and Lady Caroline, should join with the Colonel in opinion concerning those of Johnson. The Lady, in summing up the character of the latter, describes him in a line from Pope, as *a Being darkly wise;* and the Archdeacon expresses his idolatry of him (*strange idolatry!*) in the following quotation (somewhat altered) from Dr. Young,

> "His judgment just, his sentence ever strong,
> Because he's right, he's ever in the wrong."[1]

Darkly wise, and ever in the wrong, are words not very applicable to this great writer. His works evince not only great depth of erudition, but the clearest head, and the acutest judgment; and, though not free from defects, and erroneous criticisms, are a most valuable addition to English literature, and are deserving of peculiar applause, as making science subservient to virtue.

Jan. 1788 Vol. 78 p. 83[2]

We began the perusal of this letter with some degree of curiosity and expectation; but must confess, that we have been not a little disappointed, to meet with so indistinct an account of the grounds on which the ancients believed the doctrine of a future state; and so incomplete a view of the natural and moral arguments, by which modern writers have supported it. The language of Christian theologians is put into the mouths of Heathen philosophers; and absolute certainty is given to conclusions

[1] Universal Passion, Sat. vi.

[2] Art. 72. *A Letter to Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* on the Subject of a Future State. By John Taylor, LL.D. Prebendary of Westminster, &c. 4to. 1*s*. Cadell. 1787.

drawn from merely probable premises. "Upon the most steady contemplation and investigation of matter, philosophers," says our Author, "established this truth, that as matter is incapable, by any power of its own, either of action, or sensation, that therefore the soul is independent of the body, and therefore immaterial, and *consequently* immortal. Here you see, that natural religion alone proves, *beyond a doubt*, the immortality of the soul, consequently the absurdity and folly of annihilation."

True philosophers seldom step forward in their reasonings thus hastily, or assert their deductions with so much confidence.

June 1788 Vol. 78 p. 528[1]

It is a pity this piece of wit (for witty it is) had not a better foundation. Nature and probability are too much violated in the supposition of matrimonial views on the part of Johnson after the death of his friend Thrale. Let us recollect the general tenour of his correspondence with Mrs. T. lately communicated to the public, in which many of his letters were fraught with woeful complaints of his infirmities, and indelicate details of the operations of his medicines: if these were *love-letters*, they were very peculiar ones, indeed!

Oct. 1788 Vol. 79 p. 384[2]

Worthy, in every respect worthy, the head, and heart, and pen of Samuel Johnson.

Aug. 1785 Vol. 73 p. 151[3]

In these lines we observe a strength and correctness of conception and expression, not altogether unworthy of the distinguished name they are intended to celebrate.

Sept. 1785 Vol. 73 p. 227[4]

The *death* of a great man generally gives *birth* to a multitude of writers, who assume the title of POETS. But as rhime and measured syllables will not alone render verses

[1] Art. 43. *Ode, by Dr. Samuel Johnson, to Mrs. Thrale,* on their supposed approaching Nuptials. 4to. 1*s*. Faulder. 1788.

[2] Art. II. Written by the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D. for the Funeral of his Wife. Published by the Rev. Samuel Hayes, A.M. Usher of Westminster School. 8vo. 1*s*. Cadell. 1788.

[3] Art. 28. *Verses on the Death of Dr. Samuel Johnson.* 4to. 1*s*. 6*d*. Dilly. 1785.

[4] Art. 20. *An Ode* on the much lamented Death of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Written the 18th December, 1784. 4to. 1*s*. Bew.

worthy reading, so will they not, with flightiness and obscurity by their side, form all that is necessary to constitute an ode. This English *monostrophic*, however, seems to be well intended; and, in these degenerate days, some praise, at least, is due to a good design.

July 1786 Vol. 75 p. 70 [1]

There is an obscurity in this Monody, through which we have in vain attempted to penetrate. The numbers flow melodiously over the ear, but the words make few distinct impressions on the mind. Speaking of the tombs in Westminster Abbey, our Poet says,

> " Here cold Ambition asks a final pause,
> And yields supine to Death and Nature's laws;
> Here the young Cupids in the shrine above
> Mock the cold spectres of departed love.
> Here, by a pen of unavailing gold,
> The tale of woe and penury is told.
> Here Genius makes the humble earth its bed,
> And sad cold tears from colder stones are shed;
> The worm here twines like Virgil's monstrous snake,
> The golden letters fade, the columns shake;
> Sepulchral atoms blot th' æthereal view,
> And mildew thrives where verdant laurels grew.
> E'en time itself betrays a lost regard,
> And makes each tomb as mortal as each bard."

Young Cupids mocking the cold spectres of departed love —sad cold tears shed from colder stones—sepulchral atoms blotting an æthereal view—and *the worm of the tomb twining like Virgil's monstrous snake*—are phrases which appear to our *cold* fancies *vox et præterea nihil.* We might apply the same remark to many other passages in this poem; particularly when the poet makes Dr. Johnson

> " From tangled science prune the spiry *thorn*,
> Which *clouded* sense and learning's early morn: "

when he says, that

> " His mind look'd into things with piercing eye,
> *To charm the desert and to brave the sky:* "

and when he speaks of " *death's distilling affection's purer*

[1] Art. 24. *A Monody on the much-lamented Death of Samuel Johnson*, LL.D. By the Author of The Field Negroe, Antigua Planter, Grey's Cliff, Kirkstall Abbey, and other Miscellaneous Pieces. 4to. 1*s*. Baldwin.

kiss," of " fame's loud trumpet sounding *within* the stone " ; and of " a *crimson* landscape *swooning in snow*."

In the midst of many faults, we meet, however, with several good lines ; among which are the following :

" And now his urn shall drink the falling tear,
And bleeding friendship learn to sorrow there ;
Surviving Bards shall there the hours beguile,
And pilgrim feet invest the distant aisle ;
There, oft at morn, or ev'ning's awful prayer,
Some friend, some tender servant linger near,
With genuine grief shall mourn death's fatal dart,
Bend to his shrine, and smite a faithful heart ;
With rapture trace each feature of his bust,
And softly pensive wipe th' unhallow'd dust."

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